

The Marathas

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THE MARATHAS
by Dr A R KULKARNI
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The Advent of Nizamul Mulk Asaf Jah I

THE HOUSE OF SHIVAJI

Bābājī Bhōsale
(b 1533)

Mālōjī
(1552-1620)
= Dīpā Bāi Nimbālkar

Vīthōjī

Shāhājī
(1594-1664)

Sharifjī
(d 1624)

= (1) Jijā Bāi Jādhav = (2) Tuka Bāi Mohitē

Sambhājī
(d 1654)

Shivaji
(1630-80)

= Sāi Bāi = Sōyara Bāi

1630
Ekōjī (Vyankōjī)
(d early 1685)
Tanjore branch

Trimbakjī
(Kanvat branch)

Umājī (adopted)

Sambhājī
(1657-1689)
= Yēsu Bāi

Rājarām
(1670-1700)
= Tārā Bāi = Rājas Bāi

Shāhū
(1682-1749)
= Sakwar Bāi

Shivaji II
(d 1726)

Sambhājī
(Kolhāpūr branch)

= Saguna Bāi

Rāmarāj

Rāmarāj (adopted)
(d 1777)

1 Influence of Geographical features on Maratha History

Mahārāshtra is a part of the geological division of India called the Deccan. It is the homeland of the Marathas or Marathi speaking people. The topographical features of this land played a significant part in moulding the character of its people and shaping the history of this land.

Its natural regions, formed by the Western Ghāts running parallel to the coast for nearly 600 miles, are (a) the seaboard below the Sahyādri ranges called Konkan, (b) the Ghatmatha or the tableland, and (c) the Deccan plateau along the river valleys called the *Dēsh*.

The Ghatmatha, as well as Māvaḷ, the region around it, has played an important role in the medieval history of this region. It provides large rocky tracts with suitable high platforms or *mēsās*, formed by lava formation and the subsequent denudations in Western Mahārāshtra. It has thus provided natural bases for the hill forts and deep valleys. From the strategic point of view this region has been regarded as one of the best fortified regions in India of the past.

The scanty rainfall on the Deccan plateau, the rugged country due to mountains and the barren soil have largely affected the mode of life and character of people of this region who have to struggle hard for bare existence. They have had to fight against many natural and other calamities. These factors have made them tenacious, hard working, often pugnacious and lovers of independence.

2 Historical Background

The history of this region goes back to the third century B.C. The first known rulers of Mahārāshtra were the Sātavahānas who were succeeded by Abhirās, Vakatakas, Kālāchūris, Rāshtrakūtas, Chālukyās and Silāhārās. The Marathas came into the limelight of history during the Yādava period, i.e., from the twelfth century onwards. According to the Mahānubhavas this region had earned the name 'Mahānta Rāshtra' a great country during the fourteenth century.¹

The last known ruler of the Yādava dynasty was Rāmadēva, who was, according to a contemporary poet, well versed in all arts and who upheld justice in his kingdom.² 'Alāu'd dīn Khālji was the first Muslim ruler from the north to penetrate into the Deccan and to destroy the Yādava power.

1 Mahānubhava is a sect founded by Chakradhara (Haripaldēva) in the twelfth century.

2 तेथ इदुवशविलासु । जो सकलकलानिवासु ।

न्यायाते पापी क्षितीशु । श्रीरामचद्र ॥

Jnyaneshwari (Rajwade Edition) Canto 18 verse 1783

towards the close of the thirteenth century *Ẓiāu'd dīn Baranī* tells us that till the march of 'Alāu'd-dīn *Khilji* into this area, the people had never heard of the Muslims, and the Mahrattā land had never been overrun by their armies³

'Alāu'd dīn's Deccan campaign was successful beyond expectation. Within a period of twenty five days in 1296, he not only reduced the mighty Yādavā ruler Rāmadēva to the status of a vassal, but also plundered and demoralized the whole country. He inflicted a humiliating treaty on the king and carried, according to *Ferishta*, a ransom consisting of six maunds of gold, seven maunds of emeralds, rubies and diamonds, a thousand maunds of silver, four thousand bolts of silk cloth and other precious products of the Deccan⁴

His commander-in chief, Malik Kāfūr, completed the subjugation and exploitation of the Deccan in the subsequent years. Conditions of life in Mahārāshtra, therefore, in the fourteenth century were depressing and the prospects were bleak. This gave an opportunity to the Muslims to establish themselves as rulers and the dynastical rule of the Bahmanīs commenced in 1347 and lasted till the end of the fifteenth century.

As is well-known the foundation of the Bahmanī Kingdom were laid at Daulatābād which is a part of the land of the Marathas, and when Muḥammad I divided the Kingdom into four *amāf* or provinces, two of them, namely Daulatābād and Bijapur, touched the Marathā lands. But it was with a considerable amount of the difficulty that Konkan and the *Desh* were brought under the hegemony of the Bahmanī Sultān, and the coastal towns of Dābhōl and Chaul were the only effective Bahmanī outlets to the sea. Many attempts were made by the Bahmanīs to make their authority effective in coastal Mahārāshtra, but it was not till the ministry of Muḥmūd Gāwān that any tangible progress could be made. Sultān 'Alāud dīn Ahmad II commissioned *Khālaf Hasan* to proceed to the region. It was easy enough for him to put down smaller chieftains, but Shinkar Rāo Shirke gave him trouble, but he was also put down. While *Khālaf Hasan* became bed ridden of dysentery Shirke sent secret word to the Rājā of Sangamēshwar, who surrounded the coastal village in which the Bahmanī army was encamped, killed *Khālaf Hasan* and cut down the leaderless army. It was only a rump which could reach the Bahmanī headquarters at Chākan⁵

Quite naturally this great débâcle encouraged the local population to greater courage, and in particular Jākhūrāi of Sangamēshwar and the Rājā of Khēlna began to intercept trading vessels plying between the Bahmanī

3 E & D III 150

4 P. M. Joshi 'Alāu'd dīn *Khilji*'s first campaign against Dēvagin', *Dr. Yazdani Commemoration Volume*, p. 209

5 See *Bahmanīs*, 240-41, *Burhān* 82, *Ferishta*, I, 333 ff

ports to the Arabian coast. It was this interception of trade and traffic which made Mahmūd Gāwān lead a number of expeditions in the Maratha region and it was with difficulty that he could bring it effectively under Bahmanī control. He made Kōlhāpūr, right in the Maratha region, his headquarters, but he was hampered by the hilly country, guerilla tactics of the local chiefs and long-drawn battles, and lastly by party squabbles at the Bahmanī capital, Bidar. It was with considerable difficulty that he could take Rangna, Māchāl and Khēlna, after which it was a matter of time that Sangamēshwar was subdued. The road was clear now for Goa which was entered almost without a struggle on 1 February 1472.⁶

With the greatly increased extent of the Bahmanī Kingdom Mahmūd Gāwān redivided it into eight instead of four provinces, of which, Daulatābād and Junnār fell wholly within the Maratha region while Bijapur and Māhūr were partly situated in that region. The break up of the Bahmanī Kingdom into five warring states, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Berar, Bidar and Golkonda meant a considerable latitude to the Maratha people, and the process of their regeneration was accelerated by the lift given to them by Malīk 'Ambar and the later Sultāns of the 'Ādil Shāhī dynasty.

3 *Rise of Maratha Power*

The seventeenth century marks the real beginning of the active history of the Marathas who dominated the political scene of Indian history at least for two centuries.

It is difficult to say whether the term "Maratha" in the seventeenth century denoted the Maratha community or the people of Mahārāshtra. Parmānand, the author of *Shivabhārat*, makes a distinction between the Brahmans and Marathas of this region.⁷ Sabhāsad, a contemporary chronicler of Shivaji also distinguishes between the two when he refers to three Brahmans and three Marathas who would protect the state during the periods of crises.⁸ However it is difficult to say whether Rāmdās uses the word 'Maratha,' in a comprehensive sense in his well known slogan "All Marathas to unite" (मराठतितुका मेल जावा) or here he appeals only to the fighting Maratha community. Under the Peshwās the term Maratha assumed a wider connotation, embracing all Marathi speaking people.

⁶ See *Bahmānt*, 310-16. For fuller details see Mahmūd Gāwān's letters *Riāz* for specific letters dealing with the campaigns in Mahārāshtra see Sherwani *Riāzu'l-Inshā* as a Source Book of Deccan History, *IHRC*, XVII, 171.

This break up of the Bahmanī Kingdom into five succession States weakened the Muslim hold, but the Marathas had to wait till the beginning of the seventeenth century to exert themselves in their own land. In many cases they resuscitated the power of these states and it was the Mughals who put an end to them. See fn 10 infra.

⁷ See Cantos, 1 43, 4 31, 9 5.

⁸ Sabhāsad *Life of Shivaji*, ed S N Joshi, Poona, 1960, p 109.

A Marathi inscription of 1579 recently found at Kunkali (Goa) refers to the terms 'Maratha' and 'Musalmān', the term 'Maratha' meaning 'Hindu'. The inscription is about the installation of a phallus at Rāmēśhwar. "If a 'Musalmān' breaks it, his act will be equated with breaking his pledge to the Supreme Being, and if a 'Maratha' breaks it, then it is tantamount to committing the sin of murdering a Brahman. If a Musalmān restores it, he will get the credit of visiting Mecca, and if a Maratha restores it he will get the credit of visiting Kāshi."⁹

It seems that the term 'Maratha' is used in a comprehensive sense, including all the peoples in Mahārāshtra speaking the Marathi language.

The rise of Maratha power has been attributed by foreign historians like Grant Duff to fortuitous circumstances, and it has been compared with a sudden conflagration like those which occur in the forests of the Sahyādrī. The Marathas were regarded as a nation of freebooters, and they succeeded because they were cunning and adventurous. But this view is not tenable. Ranade rightly pointed out that "freebooters and adventurers never succeed in building up empires which last for generations and permanently alter the political map of a great Continent."¹⁰ The early activities of Shāhji and Shivaji indicate that it was not a chance circumstance but determined efforts that led to the rise of the Maratha power in the Deccan in the seventeenth century.

A brief review of the political situation in the Deccan in the sixteenth century would enable us to understand the significance of the emergence of Maratha power.

The Vijayanagar Empire became virtually powerless in 1565. The Bahmanī Kingdom, though it did not retain its original solidarity, its Succession States continued to exercise control over the Deccan practically till the close of the seventeenth century. The Fārūqī Sultāns of Khāndēsh (1382-1601) were vanquished by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1601.

As among the Bahmanī Succession States, the 'Imād Shāhī Kingdom of Berar was first absorbed into the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom of Ahmadnagar and ultimately became a part of the Mughal Empire when the latter was annexed to that Empire in 1636. Of the remaining three Sultānates, the Barid Shāhī Kingdom of Bidar was conquered by Ibrāhīm 'Adil Shah II of Bijapur in 1619 and became a province of the Bijapur kingdom which in its turn fell to the Mughals in 1686. The last Deccan Sultānate to succumb to Mughal arms

9 See *Sunday Sakal* 29.6.1969.

10 Ranade M. G. *Rise of the Maratha Power* Bombay University Publications, 1961, p. 2 henceforth referred to as *RMP*.

was the Qutb Shāhī Kingdom of Golkonda-Hyderabad in 1687. Thus internal "dissensions and the lack of unity among the Deccan Sulṭānates paved the way for the Mughals and enabled the Marathas to establish their authority in the Deccan. The Marathas proved more than a match for the Mughals and the latter could not take permanent roots in the region.

4. *The Bhōsalē Kula*

A number of Maratha families like the Nimbālkars of Phāltan, the Mānēs of Mhasavad, the Mōrēs of Jāvalī, the Jādhavs of Sindkhēṛ, the Ghōrpaṛs of Mudhōl, the Bhōsalēs of Verūl and others came to prominence during this period. Among them the Bhōsalēs of Verūl took a leading part in organising the Marathas and founding an independent kingdom. They trace their origin to Rājasthān,¹¹ though some scholars say that they were only a local Maratha family. Thus their origin is still shrouded in uncertainty. It seems, however, that by the sixteenth century the Bhōsalē family was coming to the front in local politics in the Maratha region, particularly since the days of Mālōjī, the son of Bābājī.¹²

It appears from contemporary records that the ancestors of Shivaji held rights to the offices of Pātil and Dēshmukh of Hingani, Berdi and Deulgāva, all in the present Dhond (Daund) taluqa of the Poona district. Bābājī, the great-grand-father of Shivaji, however, preferred to live at Verūl near the Ghṛishnēshwar temple, where he had acquired the rights as Pātil from his mother's side.¹³ Bābājī does not seem to have been an ambitious person. He preferred to lead the easy and comfortable life of a village pātil, rather than to enter into the service of a Deccan Court. He must have died between 1597 and 1599, bequeathing to his sons Mālōjī and Vithōjī, the rights to the office of pātil of Verūl, Hingani, Berdi, Deulgāva, Khanwat, Jinti, and Karnad.¹⁴

Mālōjī (c 1552-1606)

Mālōjī and his brother Vithōjī were in the service of Vangōjī *alias* Jagpāl Nimbālkār of Phāltan. It appears that on the recommendations of

11 There is a theory that the Bhōsalēs were originally Sisōdia Rājputs of Udaipūr, settled in Mahārāshṭra. The name 'Bhōsalē' is derived, according to some, from 'Bhōja' i.e., the King, and some claim it as derived from the name of the village 'Bhōslā' (or Bhōlsnā), where they were residing. See S. H. Hodivala *Studies in Indo Muslim History*, Bombay, 1939, p. 651.

12 The chroniclers of Shivaji and other contemporary writers of the seventeenth century do not give us any information about the ancestors of Shivaji beyond Mālōjī and Bābājī. However another source 'Sahitya Makarand', *Bharat Itihasa Samshodhaka Mandala Quarterly*, 1929, p. 129 gives us information about Bābājī's father Pārōjī and grand father Khelōjī.

13 Bendre V. S., *Mālōjī Raje and Shāhaji Mahārāj*, Bombay, 1968, p. 82.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 83. Verūl and Karnad (or Kannar) are in Aurangābād district, and the other villages are in Poona district.

Lakhūjī Jādhavrāo, a prominent Maratha sardār from Sindkhēṛ in the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom, Vangōjī offered his daughter Dīpābāi or Umābāi in marriage to Mālōjī. This means that Mālōjī must have acquired a status comparable to the Nimbālkars even prior to this matrimonial alliance ¹⁵

The two protagonists for supremacy in the Deccan in the last decade of the sixteenth century were Nizām Shāh of Ahmadnagar and 'Adil Shāh of Bijapur. The Nizām Shāhī Kingdom was building up its strength by soliciting the assistance of the leading Maratha sardārs. Mālōjī and his brother also entered the service of the Sultān of Ahmadnagar in 1577 ¹⁶ He received the grant of a large area of land of about 600 bigās and founded a colony called Makarandpura at Shrigonda (Ahmadnagar district) and settled there permanently. Since then his connections with Verūj were severed for ever ¹⁷

Mālōjī died on the battlefield of Indāpūr in 1605 leaving his family to the care of his brother Vithōjī. His son Shāhājī was hardly six when Vithōjī got him married to the daughter of Lākhojī Jādhav ¹⁸ He then retired to Dhārūr about 1611 ¹⁹

Vithōjī had eight sons, of whom Sambhājī, the eldest, died in 1623 in a skirmish with Jādhav Rāo ²⁰

Mālōjī was a religious minded person, and had devoted his funds to charitable works at Sikhar Singanāpūr, ²¹ where he constructed a large tank for the benefit of pilgrims visiting the shrine of Mahādēva. He was tolerant in his religious views and could at once accept Shaikh Muhammad as his gurū, and worship the deity Shiva at Ghṛishnēshwar (Verūj)

Shāhājī (1599-1664)

Mālōjī had two sons, Shāhājī and Sharifjī named after a Muslim saint Shāh Sharif ²² Shāhājī succeeded his father in the military service of the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom and held responsible positions under Malik 'Ambar. His father-in-law Lakhūjī Jādhav deserted the Nizām Shāhī State and joined the Mughals about 1621. The Mughals were endeavouring to destroy the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom and Malik 'Ambar was struggling hard to preserve it

15 *Shivabhārat*, Canto I, 49-52, *Rādhamādhava Vilāsa Champū*, ed. Rājwāḍē, Poona 1922, p. 267

16 *Shivabhārat*, I, 59-66

17 *MRSM*, p. 109

18 *Ibid*, p. 172. This goes against the romantic accounts of Shāhājī's marriage as given by some of the chroniclers

19 *Marāṭhyānchya Itihāsachi Sādhanē (MIS)*, ed. V. K. Rājwāḍē, XV, 379

20 *Shivabhārat*, I, 1-57

21 Sikhar Singanāpūr is in Satārā district.

22 *Shivabhārat*, I, 90

The submission of Malik 'Ambar to the Mughals resulted in the defection of a number of Maratha leaders from Nizām Shāhī service to the Mughals. Evidently there were two parties among the Marathas attached to the Ahmadnagar Court, and in a skirmish Vithōji's son Sambhaji was killed and Shāhji wounded. Consequent on this Jādhav Rāo left the Nizām Shāhī service and joined the Mughals. This was a signal for further defection of a number of Maratha chiefs from Nizām Shāhī service.

Malik 'Ambar was, however, not prepared to take these developments lying down. He had already neutralised the Quṭb Shāhī State by entering into an alliance with Muhammad Quṭb Shāh. He marched on Bidar, reached the suburbs of Bijapur, plundered Nauraspūr and forced Ibrāhīm 'Adil Shāh to retreat to the fort. It was then that the Mughals joined hands with Ibrāhīm 'Adil Shāh and 'Ambar had to retreat northwards. In the battle which was fought at Bhātvādi on 15 June 1625 'Ambar was supported by many Maratha officers of whom Shāhji, Sharifji, Mālōji and many others fought against the Mughals and won.²³

The battle of Bhātvādi, proved to be a landmark in the history of the Deccan for two reasons: firstly it gave a blow to the Mughals, secondly it gave opportunities to Maratha sardārs, including Shāhji, to measure their strength against the forces of the Mughals and of the 'Adil Shāhī Kingdom.

After this battle Shāhji must have retired to his jāgīr on personal rather than political grounds. The domestic problems caused by the death of his uncle Vithōji, and the sudden desertion of Jādhav Rāo from the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom for the Mughal camp no doubt influenced Shāhji's action in relinquishing Nizām Shāhī service and shifting his allegiance to Bijapur in 1625.

The death of Malik 'Ambar in ¹⁴May 1626 created a void in the political life of the Deccan.* Similarly with the death of Ibrāhīm 'Adil Shāh II the

23 Except *Shivabharat*, Canto 4 no other Hindu authorities like *Sabhasad*, or *Radhā Mādhav Vilās Champū*, and Indo-Persian authorities like *Futūḥāt*, 'Adil Shāhī of Fuzūnī Astrābādī or *Iqbāl-nāma* mention Shāhji as the hero of the battle of Bhātvādi. The only slender thread confirming Parmānand is the marginal note of Fuzūnī Astrābādī which mentions Shāhji as one of the Maratha sardārs who fought in the ranks of Malik 'Ambar. See Jadunath Sarkar *House of Shivaji* 1955, p. 27. [See also Pietro della Valle's *Travels in India* III, 1442-43 for a description of the battle. Ed.]

*[The position of Malik 'Ambar in Maratha history cannot be over-stressed. His claim to fame lies in his genius as the initiator of a new system of military tactics called 'Bargirī'. For this purpose for the first time in history he trained and made use of light Maratha cavalry and thus laid the foundation of future greatness of the Maratha nation.—D. R. Seth 'Life and Time of Malik 'Ambar,' *IC*, 1942 at p. 155. Malik 'Ambar inculcated the loyalty of the Mahārāshṭrian peasants by his land reforms and established direct connection between the cultivator

next year, the liberal and tolerant policy of the 'Ādil Shāhī government came to an end. Shāhji, who now filled the office of sarlashkar under the Bijapur State was ridiculed and insulted by the new ruler.²⁴ He therefore left 'Ādil Shāhī service once again to serve Nizām Shāh in 1627 and was able to secure the *muqāṣā* of the pargana of Poona from him in 1628.²⁵

Shah Jahan, after silencing his rival claimants to the throne on Jahangir's death, had become Emperor in 1628 and was now anxious to launch his Deccan expedition directed mainly against the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom. He induced the Bijapur government to observe neutrality in this war against Ahmadnagar. Under such circumstances, Shāhji was making attempts in vain to protect the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom. But the cold-blooded murder of his father-in-law Lākhōji Jādhav Rāo with his two sons,²⁶ and the internal dissensions and incapacity of Burhān Nizām Shāh III, made Shāhji leave Ahmadnagar in disgust. He then sought asylum in the fort of Shivneri²⁷ which was commanded by Sardār Vijay Raj, with whom he established matrimonial relations by accepting his daughter Jayanti in marriage for his son Sambhaji.²⁸ He left his wife Jijabai, who was in the family way, to the care of Sardār Vijaya Rāj at Shivneri and negotiated with the Mughals through A'zam Khān for employment. He was enrolled as Mughal mansabdār with the rank of Panīhazārī, was given a khil'at and rupees two lakhs in cash, and was commissioned to chastise Daryā Khān, the turbulent Mughal officer, who had taken shelter with the Nizām Shāh. It seems that Shāhji succeeded in subduing Daryā Khān.²⁹

It was during this critical period that Jijabai gave birth to a child at Shivneri on 19 February 1630, who was named Shivaji.³⁰

and the Government. Sardesai, *A New History of the Marathas* is quite clear that Malik 'Ambar "practically remade the history of the Deccan with the help of the Marathas" (p. 44), and that Mālōji and his son Shāhji rose to prominence as the helpmates of Malik 'Ambar (p. 45). Ed.]

24 *Shivabharat*, 9, 26-28

25 *MIS*, XV, 230, XX, 346. *Muqāṣā* is a kind of land tenure granted by the State in lieu of military service. See Vol II, Ch. XX.

26 Jadunath Sarkar gives 12 August 1630, as the date of Lākhōji's murder (*House of Shivaji*, p. 31). V. S. Bendre on the basis of *Jedhe Shakāvaft*, gives the date as 24 July 1629, *MRSM*, 188.

27 Shivneri, a hill fort in Poona district.

28 *Shivabharat*, 8, 17-18. For the reception of Shāhji in the Mughal Camp, see *Lahori*, quoted in Sarkar, *House of Shivaji*, 38-9.

29 *Ibid.*, 6, 37-38.

30 Historians are not unanimous on the date of Shivaji's birth. The traditional date, based mainly on the chronicles, and accepted by Grant Duff, Sardesai, Jadunath Sarkar and the Government of Maharashtra, falls in April, 1627. But the date mentioned above, 19 February 1630, i.e., Saka 1551, Phalgun Vadya 3, seems to be more authentic as it is based on sources like *Shivabharat*, *Jedhe Shakāvaft*, contemporary horoscope, etc. Shri Sētū Madhava Rao Pagadi is advocating a new date 12 March 1628, which is

Shāhji could not long continue with the Mughals as his interests were linked with the Nizām Shāhī dominions to which he returned in 1631. Burhān Nizām Shāh III was poisoned in February 1632 by his minister Fath Khān, and his son Husain III, a boy of seven, was raised to throne³¹. But Fath Khān was not long in the ascendant. He was so full of pride at his success that he ever faced the Mughal onslaught with the concurrence of Randaulā Khān of Bijapur. Soon he had to surrender 'Ambarkōt, Mahakōt and Daulatābād to the Mughal general Mahābat Khān. The back of Nizām Shāhī resistance was broken and Fath Khān made his submission while the boy Husain was taken to Gwalior and imprisoned there.

The days of the Nizām Shāhī monarchy seemed to be numbered. But at this crucial moment Shāhji took the lead, placed a scion of the Nizām Shāhī dynasty Murtaẓā on the throne as Murtaẓā Nizām Shāh III and made Pēmgiri (Ahmadnagar district) the capital of the State. He even persuaded Muhammad 'Adil Shāh to come to his help, and 'Adil Shāhī nobles such as Khawas Khān, Randaulā Khān and Murārī Pandit supported the cause of Deccan independence. The death of Mahābat Khān in October 1634 seemed to be a boon to Shāhji's cause. But soon tables were turned with the arrival of Shah Jahan in the Deccan early in 1636. The Imperial forces under Shā'istā Khān and Allāhvardī Khān pressed Shāhji from all sides and he had to move Murtaẓā from Pēmgiri to Mahaulī. In order to create a wedge between Shāhji and Muhammad 'Adil Shāh his capital was closely invested, Shā'istā Khan captured Junnār. The 'Adil Shāhī resistance was soon humbled and Muhammad 'Adil Shāh was made to conclude a treaty with the Mughals.

It was difficult for Shāhji to resist the onslaught any longer. Mahaulī was invested, it was only when provisions within the fort were exhausted that Shāhji surrendered the puppet Sultān along with Mahaulī and some other forts to the Mughals, and himself joined the 'Adil Shāhī service with Poona and Sūpa as his Jāgīr. This was the last phase of the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom³². Its territories were now divided between the Mughals and Bijapur.

based on the Daryā Khān incident mentioned in the *Shivabhārat*, and *Badshāh Nāmā*. For a detailed information on this point, see Apte and Paranjpe, *The birth date of Shivaji*, Poona, 1927, *Report of the Maharashtra State*, Bombay, 1968, and *Navabhārat*, Wai, November 1967.

31 According to Sarkar, Burhān Nizām Shāh was seized with insanity and died within two months (Feb. 1632), *House of Shivaji*, p. 32. [Basatin, 296, says that Husain was seven years of age when he was placed on the throne. Ed.]

32 Thus Lāhōri II, 229-30. *Shivabhārat* 9-20 says that Shāhji was able to keep Poona and Sūpa as his Jāgirs where he remained virtually independent of Mughal control. According to Sardesai, *op cit*, 64, the jāgīr granted to him was worth four lakhs per annum.

Shāhji spent the rest of his life in serving the 'Ādil Shāhīs mostly in Karnatak and helped to increase the area of 'Ādil Shāhī jurisdiction in that region. Under Randaulā Khān he captured Ikkēri in December 1637, along with Afzal Khān he took Sirī and Bangalore and reduced the Wodeyār of Seringapatam to obedience. They also captured Basavapatam, Tūmkūr and Vellore³³. Shāhji was posted permanently to Bangalore by Muhammad 'Ādil Shāh and he made it his headquarters. He converted the region "into a miniature Mahārāshtra" although he remained loyal to the 'Ādil Shāhīs all along³⁴.

Shāhji was suspected of double dealing with the recalcitrant elements in Karnatak and was also held responsible for the activities of his son Shivaji against the Bijapur government. The death of Randaulā Khān in 1643, a great friend and supporter of Shāhji, adversely affected his position in the 'Ādil Shāhī Court and at the initiative of Mustafā Khān and with the active instigation of certain Bijapur sardārs including Bājī Ghorpaṛē of Mudhōl, Shāhji was called to Bijapur and placed under surveillance³⁵. But Muhammad 'Ādil Shāh did not wish to alienate the sympathies of the powerful Maratha chief. After being under surveillance for some time he was allowed to proceed to Karnatak. It was now that his son Sambhājī was killed in an encounter with the chief of Kanakgiri³⁶.

The death of Muhammad 'Ādil Shāh in November 1656 and the dissensions that ensued at Bijapur left Shāhji undisturbed in Karnatak as the virtual master of the region. Here he introduced new methods of administration and established peace and order. It is said that he paid a brief visit to his old jagir in 1662 where he met his son and wife and urged the former not to harm 'Ādil Shāhī territory, and helped Shivaji in selecting the site for a new fort capital, Rāigarh, for his growing possessions. He returned to Bangalore, and in the subsequent year, on 23 January 1664 he suffered a fatal riding accident at Hōdigere, near Basavapatam. He was succeeded by his third son Vyankōji to his jagir in Karnatak *was there any?*

Historians have paid very little attention to the career of Shāhji and have failed to give him due credit for his part in founding the Maratha power. He was a king maker in Mahārāshtra and law giver in Karnatak. He did not assume royal power or become a *Chhatrapati* himself, but he was the virtual ruler of the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom between 1633 and 1636. He created a feeling among the Marathas that they could also carry on an indepen-

33 Some of these towns changed hands and were reconquered a few months later

34 Sardesai, *op cit*, 73

35 *Shivabhārat*, Cantos, 12, 13, 14

36 See Sardesai, *op cit*, 80, 81 also *Bakhar*, 91 Q, edited by V. K. Wakaskar, Baroda, 31, art. 31

dent existence. He spent the first part of his career, up to 1640, in Mahārāshṭra, and retired to Karnatak giving full freedom to Shivaji to manage the territories assigned to him in his Poona jāgīr

He was highly respected in Karnatak, where he introduced sound administration and brought many palālgārs and chieftains like Rājā Virabhadra of Vidupūr, Kantirava of Seringapaṭam, Keng Nāyak of Kondēs, Tirumala Nāyak of Madurāi, Venkata Nāyak of Arikēl, the ruler of Tanjore, etc under his sway and became their leader in championing their cause in the 'Ādil Shāhī Kingdom

It can hardly be denied that Shāhji paved the way for Shivaji the founder of the Maratha power. His later career, particularly from 1640 to 1664, as Rājwādē has pointed out, not only runs parallel to Shivaji's career but we often find him encouraging his son in his state-building activities³⁷ The persons who trained Shivaji in his civil and military activities were the nominees of Shāhji. They were specially selected to help him maintain discipline in his jāgīr and prepare him for his future activities. Shāhji, however, did not actively support the violent activities of Shivaji, but was content to remain a distant observer. He visited Shivaji's territory in 1660-1662, apparently to persuade him to refrain from depredations against the 'Ādil Shāhī kingdom, but the idea behind this visit seems to have been to take a review of Shivaji's activities. It was perhaps during this visit that Rāigrah was selected as the political centre, to which Shivaji shifted his capital in 1666 to meet the requirements of his growing dominions³⁸

Thus Shahji would ever remain in the annals of Maratha history as the king maker and inspirer of Maratha independence

4 Shivaji (1630-1680)

Shivaji was born in a period when the Deccan States were in a fluid condition, and the Mughals had yet to assume full control over this region. He fought with the 'Ādil Shāhīs in the initial stages of consolidation of his power, and with the Mughals in the last two decades of his career.

The condition of life in the Deccan on the eve of his birth was gloomy and bleak. The great famine of 1630-31, an unparalleled event in the history of this land according to foreign observers,³⁹ inflicted many hardships on the people⁴⁰. The contemporary Marathi and Sanskrit sources mention the devastating effects of this famine. The rising prices caused by the scarcity of food stuffs made life miserable. Even cases of cannibalism were reported

37 *Radha Madhava Vilas Champū*, Introduction, 100-103

38 *Sabhasad* 68

39 Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 218

40 *Chandrabhāg*, Ch. 2, p. 55

According to the contemporary poet saint Rāmdās, most of the people were reduced to beggary, which rendered begging fruitless⁴¹ Villages were depopulated as some people died of starvation and others were forced to leave their homes in search of livelihood elsewhere The famine took a heavy toll of population, and according to Rāmdās, only about five per cent of the population survived There may be exaggeration in this general statement, but the loss of man and animal power was no doubt considerable

This famine had dislocated the economy of the region Trade and industry had come to a standstill Prices of grain soared up and even at fancy prices provisions were not often available People were willing to dispose of their immovable property, but there was no demand for it⁴²

According to a factory record, "the whole land between Gujarat and Golkonda had become one vast charnel house" The rains that followed famine came with a vengeance only to add to the misery of the people It is asserted that "never in the memory of man the like famine and mortality happened" A Dutch report says that the cry of the people was "give us sustenance or kill us"⁴³

Thus the famine of 1630-31 adversely affected the economic life of the region, and vast areas in the Deccan were either desolated or destroyed by this unprecedented calamity

Shivaji had thus to work against many odds, political as well as economic He had to create a State which was politically enduring and economically stable

Early activities of Shivaji

Shāhji's original jāgīr comprised the tract of land in Poona district bounded by the rivers Bhīmā in the north and Nirā in the south It included four major parganās namely Indapur, Poona, Sūpa and Chākan. Parmānand has indicated the autonomy of Shāhji's jāgīr by pointing out that after the destruction of the Nizām Shāhī Kingdom at the hands of the Mughals, Shāhji who had been a king maker agreed to a division of what was left, between the Mughals and Bijapur while having his jāgīr regranted to him⁴⁴ This explains why Shivaji behaved like a born ruler and adopted a seal of his own when he was hardly sixteen A Marathi document of 1646, recording his confiscation of the *Pātulki Watan* belonging to Bābaji Gujar of Ranzē village

41 *Itihās Manjari*, ed D V Apte, Poona, Shaka 1845, pp 23-27

42. *BISM*, Shaka 1838, pp 60-62

43 Foster, *op cit*, 1630-33, 181

44 ततो निजामविषय शाह स्वविषय विना ।
दिल्लीन्द्राय ददौ कचित् येदिलाय च कचन ॥२०॥
Shivabhārati, Canto 9, 20.

Khēdebārē region, and punishing him by cutting off his hands and legs for misbehaviour, bears his seal in Sanskrit ⁴⁵

It was from this autonomous jāgīr that Shāhji assigned about 36 villages from Poona pargana to Shivaji in 1636, and by 1645-46 he became the trustee of the entire jāgīr. The tract in which he was working in his initial stages was known as Māva, the western belt of the Poona district about 90 miles in length and between 12 and 24 miles in width. This area was yielding a revenue of about 40 thousand hons per year ⁴⁶

Shivaji was trained in the art of administration by Dādōji Kōndadēv, a kulkarnī of Malthāna (Poona district), and Shāmrao Ranzekar. Both were trusted servants of Shāhji and were mainly responsible for imbibing in young Shivaji a spirit of self-respect and independence. His character was mainly built up by Jijabai, his mother, to whom he was deeply attached. Parmānand refers to his early education and describes how he learned reading and writing as well as various other arts necessary for an administrator ⁴⁷

Shivaji and Dādōji had to undertake the rehabilitation of the jāgīr which had been ravaged by the 'Ādil Shāhī sardārs as well as by the devastating famine. He had also to settle the long-standing disputes of the people regarding naṭans, with a view to winning their support to his cause. The part played by Dādōji Kōndadēv in realizing the settlement of areas, particularly in Khēdebārē and Muthē māva regions, was remarkable. It is recorded that "he restored the lands to prosperity and compelled the dēshmukhs and the kulkarnīs to help cultivation by inducing people to settle in those areas" ⁴⁸

In medieval period forts were considered the most strategic points in any region and Shivaji was not slow to realize this. The first fort captured by him was perhaps Kondānā (Sinhgārā from Bijapur, probably after the death of Dādōji Kōndadēv in 1647 ⁴⁹. He took possession of the Purāndar fort

45 His seal reads

प्रतिपञ्चदशरेखेव वधिष्णुविश्ववदिता ।

शाहसूनो शिवस्यैषा मुद्रा भद्राय राजते ॥

' This seal of Shiva the son of Shaha waxing (daily) like the crescent of the moon and adored by the universe shines with benevolent splendour "

According to some Shivaji aimed at founding a Hindu State (Hindavi Svarājya) but the document from which this reference is drawn is not an original one but is a copy, and the editor, Rājwāḍē, has expressed his doubts about the validity of this document, in a footnote, *MIS*, 15 268. At least his seal appears to be a secular one shining for the welfare of all people

46 *Sabhasad*, p 107

47 *Shivabharat* Cantos, 9 70-74, 10 34-41

48 *Shiva Charitra Sahitya BISM* Publication, II letters 95-96 (henceforth referred to as *SCS*)

49 *Shivabharat*, introduction, p 130

probably in the same year, by bringing pressure on the sons of Sarnāik, the qil'ahdār of the fort, as it was of great strategic importance to him⁵⁰ Earlier he had persuaded Dādōji Narasprabhū Dēshpāndē of Rohidkhōrē to help him in his mission of liberation of the Maratha country⁵¹ In the next few years he brought Rohida (Vichitrargarh), Tōranā (Prachandgarh), Rājgarh, Chākan, etc under his control, and fortified his jāgīr against any sudden attack from the enemy

These bloodless acquisitions made Shivaji the master of northern Konkan and this he did without disturbing the existing governmental arrangements Shivaji, however, felt that his territorial authority had not yet extended beyond his original jāgīr He had made up his mind to control all the important posts in his region Jāvaḷī, which had a commanding strategic position, now attracted his attention and he started planning its acquisition

Jāvaḷī was then held by a member of a Maratha family called the Mōrēs enjoying the title of Chandra Rāo This principality had been under the sovereignty of Bijapur ever since the sixteenth century Shivaji aimed at extending his territory into south Konkan This was possible only if he had held Jāvaḷī He had amicable relations with the Mōrēs till 1656, and he hoped to win them over to his side But the terms which Shivaji proposed were refused by the Mōrēs Shivaji thereupon sent a strong force under Raghunāth Ballāl Kōrdē, which engaged the Mōrē army and defeated it Pratap Rāo Mōrē escaped to Bijapur while Yashwant Rāo fled to Raḡrī Shivaji now began negotiating with him through an agent and a meeting was arranged between the two "When the Mōrēys came down to meet Shivaji he killed Yashwant Rāo and carried his two sons to his possession"

This act of Shivaji has been held by some historians as "the result of deliberate murder and organised treachery," a premeditated murder for personal gain and not a pardonable homicide done in self defence or in the heated blood of an open fight,⁵² while others consider it as an act, political in nature committed under dire political exigencies⁵³ Whatever may be the motives of Shivaji his gains in men and money out of this incident were considerable and they enabled him to strengthen his original jāgīr by acquiring new areas The capture of Javaḷī led in fact to the acquisition of the important forts of Pratāpgarh and Rajgarh

While stabilising his position in his own and the adjoining territories, he endeavoured simultaneously to maintain friendly relations with the Mughals

⁵⁰ SCS, III, 399

⁵¹ MIS, Vol 15 268

*[The episode has been described at length by Sardesai, *op cit*, 112, 113. Ed]

⁵² Sarkar, *Shivaji and His times*, pp 43-44

⁵³ B B Misra, "The Incident of Javaḷī," *JIH*, XV, 54-70

in the Deccan which had been administered by Aurangzeb since 1653 Shivaji sought permission from the Mughals to acquire territories and forts from the 'Ādil Shāhī Kingdom, and it was granted without hesitation as they themselves were interested in wiping out 'Ādil Shāhī influence altogether.

But this peace with the Mughals proved to be transitory. After the conquest of Jāvaḷī, Shivaji launched an attack against the Mughals themselves. It was in May 1657 that Shivaji delivered a night attack on Junnār and carried away a vast amount of booty. He then attacked Ahmadnagar where he was only partially successful⁵⁴ Aurangzeb therefore adopted defensive measures and instructed his officers to beat back the raiders, pursue them and annihilate them. In the meanwhile, the Bijapur King concluded peace with the Mughals. Shivaji therefore thought it prudent to stop raiding the Mughal territory after capturing the city of Kalyān in 1657. While on the one hand he continued strengthening his forces, he sought and obtained an agreement from Aurangzeb and pledged his loyalty to the Emperor. But the departure of Aurangzeb to the north in January 1658 to fight his way to the throne changed the whole situation.

Shivaji had by now consolidated his position in his original territory and had extended it by capturing the Jāvaḷī principality of the Mōrēs. In 1647-48, his sway was confined only to areas in Poona, Indāpūr, Chākan and Bārāmatī but by 1656 not only was the Jāvaḷī principality added to it but he had captured the areas between Māhuḷī and Mahād, thus making himself the master of north Konkan except the portions belonging to the 'Ādil Shāhī Kingdom, the Siddis and the Portuguese.

He had paid special attention to the organisational aspect of his small state even in 1657-58. He had a band of workers such as Mōrōpant Pinglē the Pēshwa, Nilō Sondēva the Majumdār, Nētāji Pālkar the Sarnaubat, Ābāji Sōndēva the Sūrnīs and Gangāji Mangāji the Wāqnīs, helping him in conducting the administration of his small state. He had an army of about 1000 horse, nearly the same number of infantry and forty forts under his control⁵⁵. Thus by 1659 Shivaji was well-prepared for any eventuality and was in readiness to accept any challenge to his authority.

The Afzal Khān Episode

The capture of Jāvaḷī by Shivaji in 1656 alarmed the 'Ādil Shāhī authorities who started looking at Shivaji's activities with great concern. As most of the leading Maratha sardārs like Ghātge, Nimbālkar, Jādhav, Mōrē, Shirkē, Mahādik, Gūjar, Mōhītē, etc., were attached to the 'Ādil Shāhī Kingdom, its rulers in the initial stages thought that they could curb Shivaji without

⁵⁴ *Sabhasad*, 4

⁵⁵ Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 57.

much effort. As early as 1644 Muhammad 'Ādil Shāh had urged Bājī Ghōrpaṇē of Mudhōl to check the activities of Shivaji in the Poona region⁵⁶ and dissuade the people from joining him in his rebellious undertakings. But Shivaji thwarted the 'Ādil Shāhī moves and proclaimed himself the master of the Māval territory⁵⁷ and later of the Jāvalī area. According to the political usages of the seventeenth century, a jāgirdār was not the master of the forts lying within his territorial jurisdiction. But Shivaji had realized the historical fact that he could control his territories only if he could possess the forts lying there. This made him adopt the policy of capturing forts in quick succession and of establishing his complete control over the jāgīr. The 'Ādil Shāhī rulers had realized the danger involved in it and brought pressure on Shāhji to dissuade his son from such anti-'Ādil Shāhī activities. Shāhji was confined at Bijapur and was released only when Shivaji agreed to surrender Kondānā (Sinhgaṛh) to the Bijapur Kingdom.

The release of Shāhji under pressure, however, gave a new turn to Shivaji's activities. He first acted as his father's deputy but after this event, he declared himself independent in his jāgīr and established his new status by capturing Jāvalī in 1656.

Muhammad 'Ādil Shāh died in November 1656, and the reins of the State fell into the hands of Baī Sāhibā, the mother of 'Āli 'Ādil Shāh II, who was a minor. When Shāhji expressed his inability to control his son,⁵⁸ Baī Sāhibā appealed to her nobles to undertake the task of punishing Shivaji. Afzal Khān, one of the leading military nobles of the 'Ādil Shāhī court, was commissioned to march against Shivaji and bring him alive or dead.⁵⁹ Afzal Khān assured her in these words: "What is Shivaji? I shall take him alive and bring him here a prisoner without ever alighting from my horse."⁶⁰ Farmāns were issued in the name of the Sultān to the dēshmukhs of the Māval territory ordering them to join Afzal Khān. Some of them like the Khōpaḍēs responded to this call, but the Jēdhēs refused to join the Khān and preferred to serve the interests of Shivaji.⁶¹

A farmān issued to Kānhōji Jēdhē in June 1659 outlines the purpose of Afzal Khān's expedition. It says: "Shivaji either through ignorance or unconsciously is disturbing the Muslims and capturing forts in the 'Ādil Shāhī territories." Afzal Khān was therefore, appointed to drive him out from that territory and Kānhōji was ordered to help him in putting an end to Shivaji.⁶²

56. *Persian Source of Indian History*, ed. G. H. Khare, BISM, Poona, 1934, I, 48.

57. *MIS*, 17, 10, 19, *Ibid*, 8, p. 2.

58. *Sakhsat*, 7.

59. *Shivakalin Patra Sar Sangraha* (SPSS), BISM, Poona, 1930, I, 774.

60. *Sakhsat*, p. 8.

61. *MIS*, 15, 336, 338, Vol. 17, 11.

62. *SPSS*, Vol. I, 774.

But this request went unheeded and the Jēdhēs not only continued as partisans of Shivaji but they also persuaded other dēshmukhs to co-operate with him ⁶³

The Khān left Bijapur in September 1659 and met Shivaji on the small plateau on the Pratāpgarh hill on 10 November 1659, where he was killed by Shivaji. Afzal Khān was unpopular among the Marathas as he was suspected to have been responsible for the death of Sāmbhaji the elder brother of Shivaji in 1654 on the battlefield of Kanakpurī, as well as for desecration of the temples of Pandharpūr and Tuljāpūr. The death of Afzal Khān was therefore widely acclaimed in the Maratha country.

This episode may rightly be described as a turning point in the career of Shivaji ⁶⁴. It appears that the army at the disposal of the Khān was not adequate enough to resist Shivaji. He was, therefore, advised by Barī Sāhibā to "pretend friendship with his army" ⁶⁵. The military weaknesses of Bijapur thus enabled Shivaji to realise his aim of founding an independent Kingdom on the ruins of that State. After this event, the 'Ādil Shāhi power did not make any serious attempt to curb Shivaji. It tried to maintain, on the contrary, friendly relations with him, particularly after 1672 ⁶⁶.

The Afzal Khān episode is significant in Maratha history in many respects. The attack on Afzal's camp after his death secured for Shivaji a large booty which enabled him to consolidate and strengthen his position. It also put to test his entire organisation of the State. Shivaji was apprehensive of the probable danger involved in facing this ordeal. He had taken due precautions regarding the survival of the Maratha power, and it must be said that his organisation withstood this critical moment in Maratha history. It established the Maratha power firmly and encouraged Shivaji to plunge into greater adventures.

This episode has become a matter of controversy among historians for a long time. Jadunath Sarkar, however, after weighing all recorded evidence in this behalf, has settled the point "that Afzal Khān struck the first blow" ⁶⁷.

The conflict between Shivaji and Bijapur was essentially political in nature, and not communal. It may be interpreted as a war of liberation in which Shivaji succeeded in winning over the dēshmukhs of the Maval region to his side as against Afzal Khān.

63. *Shiva Charitra Pradīp*, ed. D. V. Apte and S. M. Divekar, BISM, Poona 1925, *Jedhe Shakāvali*, p. 5.

64. *Shivabhārat*, Cantos 17 to 21, *Sabhasad*, pp. 7-19.

65. *English Records on Shivaji (ERS)*, ed. Paranjpe & D. V. Kale, BISM, Poona 1931, I, p. 3.

66. SPSS, II, 2236, p. 683, *Shiva Charitra Pradīp*, 30.

67. Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 74.

Taking full advantage of the flight of the Bijapur army from Pratāpgarh Shivaji marched to Panhālā which was garrisoned by the Bijapur troops, and by a stratagem occupied it. Rāngana and Khēlna were taken by assault and Shivaji changed the name of the latter to Vishālgarh or "Gigantic Fort" a name by which it is known to the present day. He then marched to Rājāpūr on the sea, captured Dābhōl and sent enormous booty to his redoubt at Rājgarh. There was consternation at Bijapur and the Sultān ordered a large force to proceed against Panhālā and placed it under Faḍal Muhammad Khān son of Afzal Khān. At the same time Sīdī Jauhar, who was dignified by the title of Salābat Khān, was asked to join Faḍal. Panhālā was closely invested by the Bijapur army and it was difficult for Shivaji to prevent the encirclement. While he was successful in escaping to Vishālgarh on 22 September 1660, it was not till after 'Alī 'Ādil Shāh had himself proceeded to the fortress and the siege was tightened so that it was taken over in January 1661.

But Shivaji was restless and he again appeared before Rājāpūr which was captured and plundered. As Shivaji suspected the English factors there of siding with his enemies, he imprisoned some of them and did not release them for two years. After Rājāpūr he moved on to Shringārpūr which was under a Maratha chief, Surya Rāo Survē. In the action Survē was killed and Shringārpūr was taken over by Shivaji.⁶⁸

Shivaji had now become the virtual master of south Konkan and 'Ādil Shāh wanted to oust him from there. He therefore sent his general Ikhlas Khān with Bāji Ghōrparē of Mudhōl and Shivaji's half brother Vyankōji to chastise him. But Shivaji struck first. Before Bāji Ghōrparē could join Ikhlas Khān he surprised the former by attacking him in Mudhōl itself. He plundered the town, killed Bāji and put his men to the sword, and so defeated the plans of 'Alī 'Ādil Shāh.

'Alī 'Ādil Shāh died in December 1672 and was succeeded by his five year old son Sikandar, the last ruler of the 'Ādil Shāhī dynasty. No doubt taking advantage of this change Shivaji recaptured Panhālā, Satārā and Parali. A strong force sent under the leadership of Bahlōl Khān had an encounter with the Maratha forces headed by Pratāp Rāo Gūjar at Umarāni (Umbrāni) about thirty-five miles from Bijapur. Bahlōl was defeated in open action on 15 April 1673, but on entreating the Maratha general, was allowed to escape. Shivaji ordered his pursuit and he was routed at Nēsārī. But the victory was won at the cost of the life of the Maratha general Pratāp Rāo.

Shivaji and Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb was the Viceroy of the Deccan twice, once from 1636 to 1644 and next from 1652 to 1658. During his first Viceroyalty he was pre-occupied

⁶⁸ Sarkar, *Shivaji*, XIV for a full description of Shivaji's dealing with the Rājāpūr factors see, Sardesai, *op. cit.*, 140. For the Shringarpur affair, *ibid.*, 139.

with reorganisation of Deccan finances as also with the affairs of Bijapur. The interference of Aurangzeb in the affairs of Bijapur on the basis of the supposed illegitimacy of Muhammad 'Ādil Shāh's successor 'Āli 'Ādil Shāh II resulted in the annexation of Bidar, Kalyānī and Parēnda to the Mughal Empire in 1657. On the other hand Shivaji felt confident enough to make a night attack on the Mughal fortress of Junnār in May 1657 and carry off innumerable booty from it. Not long after this he appeared before Ahmadnagar and, as has been noted above, was partly successful in raiding it.

It was now that Aurangzeb left the Deccan for the north to fight his way to the throne, and his continued absence allowed Shivaji to consolidate his position in Konkan.

Firmly seated on the throne, Aurangzeb appointed Shā'istā Khān to the Viceroyalty of the Deccan. Shā'istā Khān started on the Deccan expedition in July 1659. He left Ahmadnagar in February, occupied Poona and Bārāmṭī and took up his residence in Shivaji's own house, the Lāl Mahal. He was able to capture many forts including Chākan which was defended by Firangōji Narsala well nigh for two months.

Kār Tālib Khān, assisted by the Rāi Bāgan of Māhūr, was commissioned to chastise Shivaji in south Konkan. But Shivaji not only humbled the Khān, but many Rajās of Konkan came under his grip. On the whole Shā'istā Khān was successful and "wove his coil round him (Shivaji) and crippled him in the region round about Sūtārā." But at the end of three years of comparative failure Shivaji contrived to come down upon Shā'istā Khān's residence at Poona. He as well as his four hundred intrepid followers were all dressed as Mughal soldiers and were thus admitted by the gate-keeper without suspicion. In the dead of the night Shivaji entered the house and made short work of the sleeping Mughal soldiers, and it was sheer luck of the Khān that he was not killed but escaped with the loss of his forefingers.⁶⁹

This was followed in 1664 by the spectacular attack on Surat, the richest port of the Mughal empire on the west coast. The Mughal Governor, Fathu 'l-lāh Khān did not offer battle and shut himself in the Fort leaving the town at the mercy of Shivaji's men. The city was plundered⁷⁰ and the spoils were utilized in fortifying and strengthening Maratha forts. The reports of the barbarous cruelty and atrocities of the Marathas in Surat⁷¹ are based on the reports of a factor Anthony Smith, a man of shady character,⁷² and contem-

⁶⁹ Sardesai, *op cit*, 143-4

⁷⁰ *Sabhasad*, 60-61

⁷¹ *ERS*, I, 73, p. 60

⁷² The President of Surat Factory writes about him that he injured the Company's interest by telling some lies to the Marathas during his captivity. See *Foreign Biographies of Shivaji*, Calcutta, Introduction, XXXVI

porary evidence does not accuse Shivaji as being guilty of unnecessary cruelty⁷³ His aim was merely to wrest money from the rich merchants of the chief Mughal port, and in this he vastly succeeded

Surat was again plundered in October 1672 by Shivaji who appeared before the town with an army of fifteen thousand. He had received intelligence that the Mughal Governor was dead and there was only a small garrison to defend the fort. Shivaji pillaged the town for three days and retreated only on receiving the news that the Mughals were concentrating there to attack the Marathas. The English merchants of Surat were so cowed down that they waited on Shivaji with presents of cloth and other articles while he was there. It is said that he was able to take with him a vast treasure worth sixty-five lakhs.

Aurangzeb, determined to crush Shivaji's growing power, now sent one of his chief nobles, Mirzā Rājā Jai Singh of Ambār, as Viceroy and Commander in Chief of the Deccan. Jai Singh was already past 60 when he was commissioned for the task in which many generals had failed. He began by establishing his hold on the uplands of the region, and solicited the support of the English and the Portuguese to help him by their armies, as well as of the Palīgārs of Karnatak. He took up his residence at Poona and occupied the important post of Lōhgaṛh. The Mughal army laid siege to the great fort of Purāṇḍar. Shivaji, who was camping near Gorā, reached Purāṇḍar about the middle of April. He at once came to the conclusion that it was difficult to oppose Jai Singh's forces and made his submission on 11 June 1665. The treaty of Purāṇḍar was signed on the 12th. By this treaty Shivaji ceded to the Mughal twenty-three forts and adjacent areas yielding a revenue of four lakh hons, while he retained only twelve forts which could hardly fetch a revenue of one lakh hons. Jai Singh, at the same time, asked Shivaji to pay a visit to the Capital, Agra, and present himself at the Imperial darbār⁷⁴. After making necessary arrangements for the administration of his estate during his absence he proceeded to Agra with his son Sambhājī, seven officers and a select escort of 250, on 5 March 1666, and reached it on 11 May 1666.

Under the order of the Emperor he was met at one day's march from the capital by Rām Singh, son of Mirzā Rājā, and other dignitaries. He was led to the Diwān-i Khās by Rām Singh and Mukhlis Khān, when Shivaji presented a nadhar (offering) to the Emperor. It was the Emperor's birthday and all

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. XXXV.

⁷⁴ See *Sabhasad* 43-51.

[The precipitate submission of Shivaji has surprised many historians. Some like Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 47, refer to "the native Chronicle" which says that Shivaji was inspired by the goddess Bhavāni and that Jai Singh was also "a favourite of the gods." Sardesai *op. cit.*, 158, says that he wanted to appeal to Jai Singh "as a Hindu" to appreciate and support the national uplift. However that may be, it appears that he did not feel equal to the task of opposing the Mughal army just then. *Ed.*]

was glittering at the Court Shivaji saw robes of honour being presented to prominent persons and was piqued by his having to stand in the third row behind Jaswant Singh. He was flurried and left the Court unceremoniously. The Emperor was greatly concerned and issued orders that Shivaji should not attend the Court any more. He was now "put in the charge of Rām Singh" but was allowed visits from many officials of rank to whom he sent sweetmeats by way of gift. No doubt with the connivance of his entourage, on 17 August 1666, he put himself in one of the large covered baskets and his son Sambhaji in another, to be carried as sweets tied to a pole on the shoulders of hired coolies. It was thus that he reached the outskirts of Agra, where two horses were ready for the father and the son and thence he travelled to Mathura and reached Rājgarh on 20 November ⁷⁵

Shivaji's miraculous escape from Agra is an enigma which still puzzles historians. Nothing can be said conclusively regarding the route of his return. As a consequence of this escape as well as of his recent set-back at Bijapur, Jai Singh was replaced by Prince Mu'azzam as the Viceroy and Jaswant Singh as his adviser. Jai Singh, perhaps by the shock of this humiliation, died at Burhānpūr in August 1667.

Just then Shivaji took advantage of the change of Government in the Deccan and prevailed upon the new Viceroy, who was more pliant than Jai Singh, to approach the Emperor for an understanding with him. The Emperor himself welcomed Shivaji's offer and sent a farmān granting the title of Rājā and at the same time confirming a manṣab of 5,000 on Sambhaji. Sambhaji was asked to join Mu'azzam at Aurangābād and was duly received by him, but was allowed to return. The next year he was again at Aurangābād with a Marathi contingent, and was presented an elephant and a jewelled sword by the Viceroy ⁷⁶. But peace between the Emperor and Shivaji did not last long, and Shivaji was again at loggerheads with the Mughal Empire in 1669.

Aurangzeb could never forget the escape of Shivaji from Agra. He wrote in his last will, "The greatest pillar of a government is the keeping of information about everything that happens in a kingdom,—while even a minute's negligence results in shame for long years. See, how the flight of the wretch Shiva, which was due to carelessness, has involved me all these distracting campaigns to the end of my days" ⁷⁷.

⁷⁵ See Sarkar, *Shivaji*, 173-77. According to Jēdhē Chronology Shivaji's escape was made possible in a covered basket. See also, *Source Book of Marathi History*, edited by Rawlinson and Patwardhan, p. 35, *Shivaji's visit to Agra, from Rajasthan Records*, ed. Sarkar and Raghubir Singh, Poona, 1963. *Jēdhē Shakavāṇi*, SCP, p. 24.

[The strange episode of Shivaji's successful flight from Agra right through the Mughal provinces shows the discrepant and possibly corrupt state of the Empire in those days. Ed.]

⁷⁶ Sarkar *Shivaji*, 174-76.

⁷⁷ Quoted from "Anecdotes of Aurangzeb" in Sarkar's *Shivaji*, 153-54.

Although Prince Mu'azzam had Rājā Jaswant Singh and Diler Khān as his counsellors, the period of Mu'azzam's Viceroyalty spelt a complete failure of Mughal arms. On the one hand Mu'azzam was not equal to the task of opposing Shivaji with any prospect of success and on the other there were differences between him and his advisers, while Shivaji was always alert and nonchalant. Moreover it is reported that "both Sultān Mu'azzam and Jaswant Singh were in the habit of receiving large sums of money from Sivajee." Naturally Shivaji took advantage of all these factors and was able to recapture some of the major forts ceded to the Empire by the Treaty of Purandar, including the great fort of Sinhgaṛh which was officered by the Rājput Udaya Singh Rathōr.⁷⁸ This was followed by the capture of Purāndar, Māhōlī, Kalyān, Bhivandī and Lōhgaṛh, but Shivaji was not able to recover Shivrī. His attempt to take Janjīrā was also foiled by the stout defence of the citadel by the habashī officers especially by the Admiral Siddī Sumbul who was granted the title of Yāqūt Khān by Aurangzeb for his defence of the island post.⁷⁹

Shivaji was touched to the quick by the aid the Mughal governor of Surat gave to the Siddīs of Janjīrā and it was now that he raided Surat a second time. He was at Surat from 3 October to 5 October 1670, and retraced his steps only when he heard that a large Mughal army was on the way from Burhānpūr. He not only extracted sixty six lakh rupees worth of booty from the sacked town but also the promise of a payment of twelve lakhs per annum in future. On the way back he met a large Mughal contingent between Vānī and Dindōrī. Though the Mughal artillery proved effective, Shivaji managed to inflict some damage on the enemy and make his way into Konkan.⁸⁰

These successive set-backs enraged Aurangzeb, and with a view to intensifying his campaign, he appointed Mahābat Khān to the Deccan command and he was followed by Bahādur Khān and Diler Khān. The Marathas under the leadership of Mōrōpant Pinglē captured the important fort of Salhēr, lying on the border of Khāndēsh and Gujarat, early in 1672. Meanwhile Shivaji was harassing the Mughals in Khāndēsh, Baglānā and Berar. The Mughals tried to recapture Salhēr but failed.⁸¹ As has been mentioned above, the death of 'Alī 'Adīl Shāh II and the succession of the boy Sikandar made Shivaji's task comparatively easy in the Deccan, and when Diler Khān tried to meet Shivaji's army in south Konkan he was defeated. The rising of the Afghāns

⁷⁸ Grant Duff, *op cit*, I, 187. Grant Duff's description of Sinhgaṛh and its site, on pp. 187-88, is well worth a study. See also Sarkar, *Shivaji*, 208. Sinhgaṛh was captured on 4 February 1670.

⁷⁹ See Sarkar, *Shivaji*, 342, note.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 176-78.

⁸¹ It was this defeat of the Mughal army which brought Mahābat Khān into disgrace and led to his transfer to Afghanistan. He met his death on the way. See *Sabhasad* 75-76.

in the Imperial capital diverted the Emperor's attention from the south and he recalled Dīlēr Khān from the Deccan. Thus Shivaji remained unconquered and undisturbed by the Mughals practically till his death, except for a short while by Dīlēr Khān in 1678-79, when Panhālā was attacked.

By 1673 Shivaji felt secure from any danger both from the Bijapuris and the Mughals, and he now formulated his plans to have himself crowned as Chhatrapati and thus affirm the foundation of the Maratha State.

"Chhatrapati Shivaji"

Shivaji decided to perform his coronation ceremony on a grand scale because he wanted to demonstrate that he was not a 'mere zamīndār' or a vassal of Bijapur but an independent sovereign. He wanted complete equality of status with other sovereign powers in India. He felt that he could claim loyalty of the people and allegiance of the chieftains only after declaring himself a crowned head and thus assume sovereign power over the Maratha country. He had subdued his opponents, brought a good deal of territory under his sway, and so commanded respect from everybody. There seemed full justification for him to arrogate to himself the dignity of a crowned head and the position of the Chhatrapati of his people. As *Sabhāsad* puts it, "He (Gagabhatta) was rather uneasy that while the Musalman Emperor sat on the throne under an umbrella, King Shivaji who had overawed the governments of four emperors and possessed seventy-five thousand cavalry and infantry, forts and strongholds, should have no throne and other insignia of honour enjoyed by the Musalman Emperors. He, therefore, expressed his opinion that the Maratha king should use all those insignia."⁸²

Shivaji was crowned on the auspicious Friday, *Jyestha Śuddha 13*, Saka 1596/6 June 1674. A golden throne weighing 32 maunds, inlaid with the choicest and most precious jewels was manufactured for the occasion. According to *Sabhāsad*, the cost of the coronation was one crore and 42 lakh hons.⁸³ Fifty thousand Brahmans learned in the Vēdas were assembled apart from many hundreds of other holy men, and they were treated for four months with food, sweets, money, ornaments and clothes. "Gagabhatta was given immense wealth." Every one of the Pradhāns or ministers was rewarded.⁸⁴ Shivaji started an era, the Rājashaka, to commemorate this event. While pointing out the significance of this coronation, *Sabhāsad* says, "Hitherto in this age Mleccha Emperors ruled over the earth, but now this was the first Maratha King that assumed the dignity of Emperor, an event of no ordinary importance."⁸⁵

82. *Sabhāsad* as translated in "Source Book of Maratha History" ed. Rawlinson and Patwardhan, Bombay, 1929, p. 123.

83. Jadunath Sarkar thinks that it cannot be higher than 10 lakh hons, *Shivaji*, p. 214.

84. Sharma, *op cit*, 177-8.

85. *Source Book of Maratha History*, p. 124.

Jijābai, Shivaji's mother died on 18th June, a few days after the ceremony Shivaji had to perform his second enthronement three months after the first in accordance with the tāntrik rites suggested by Nischal Pūrī Gōswāmī⁸⁶

Shivaji in Karnatak

The coronation ceremony and the celebrations on the occasion had depleted the treasury of Shivaji. He had a very busy career till his coronation, but his fighting did not add much to his territory. He could not bring even one-third of the Maratha region under him. His kingdom now comprised only a narrow strip of land of western India which included parts of modern Nāsik, Poona, Satārā, Ratnagiri and Kolaba districts. He therefore, needed more money and territory to justify his claim to be the Chhatrapati of the Marathas. It was with this motive that he planned the great Karnatak expedition in 1677 and by 1678 carved out a kingdom in the South called the 'Kingdom of Chandī' which proved of great strategic importance in later years.

The eastern portion of the South was mostly held by nobles of the 'Ādil Shāhī State, Vyankōji (Ēkōji), Shivaji's step brother, had carved out a principality for himself at Tanjore in 1675 as a vassal of Bijapur. The charge that Shivaji, at the instance of Raghunāth Hanumantē, the former counsellor of Vyankōji, demanded a share in his father's Jāgīr⁸⁷ in Karnatak as well as the 'biruds' i.e. insignia of honour and rank,⁸⁸ from his brother does not seem to be acceptable. Shivaji did not want to destroy Vyankōji's principality, but only to be its protector.⁸⁹

Shivaji found more favourable conditions to launch an expedition in the South in 1677. The civil war in the 'Ādil Shāhī Kingdom, caused by the struggle for supremacy at the Bijapur court between the Dakhnīs and the Habashīs, and the preoccupation of the Mughals with the north-west frontier problems, enabled Shivaji to implement his policy uninterruptedly. He sought and obtained not merely the neutrality of Abu'l Hasan Quṭb Shāh of Hyderabad but actually his moral and monetary help in what is called Shivaji's Grand Design. It is said that Vyankōji had as his adviser Raghunāth Hanumantē who had been in Shāhji's service and after his death continued to manage his jāgīrs which descended to Vyankōji. It is not clear what was the cause of friction between the master and servant but the fact remains that Hanumantē lost Vyankōji's confidence and applied that he may be allowed to go to Kāshī on a pilgrimage. But instead of proceeding to Kāshī he first proceeded to Bijapur where there was a tussle between the Dakhnīs and the Habashīs, and then went straight to Hyderabad and was received there with open arms by the Pēshwā

⁸⁶ Sarkar, *Shivaji* pp 211-14, gives details of these rites

⁸⁷ *Sabhāsad*, p 90

⁸⁸ *Mahārāshtrīhāsachi Sādhane*, ed V S Bendre, Bombay, 1966 Vol II, p 171 72

⁸⁹ *Sabhāsad*, p 91

Mādannā Besides long secret talks with the Pēshwā he was received in audience by the Sultān with whom he conversed "in chaste Persian" He found Abu'l Hasan keen on receiving Shivaji at his capital and explore the possibilities in a joint conquest of the South.

It was a bold and far-reaching objective which Shivaji had in mind, and there is little doubt that it was not entirely of his own accord that he sought Mādannā's help and arranged his visit to the Quṭb Shāhī Capital Before proceeding to Hyderabad Shivaji had sought the blessing of a Muslim saint Bābā Yāqūt of Kēlsī, and of Maunī Bāwā of Patgāon When he arrived at Hyderabad he was received in a right royal manner He had long discussions both with Mādannā and the Sultān, and a pact was signed under which (i) the Sultān was to pay 30,000 hons per day to Shivaji's army so long as it was fighting in Karnatak, (ii) 5,000 Quṭb Shāhī soldiers were to join in the expedition, (iii) the territory conquered by the combined army was to be divided equally between Shivaji and Abu'l-Hasan, (iv) they should jointly oppose any Mughal advance southwards, and (v) Shivaji agreed to pay one lakh hons to Abu'l Hasan⁹⁰

Shivaji left Hyderabad in March 1677. His first venture was to cut Bijapur off from the South, and travelling by forced marches *via* Karnūl, Tirupati and Madras he reached Jinji and lured the Bijapuri commander to deliver that great fort to him He then proceeded to Vellore The city stood a long siege and it was not till August 1678 that it was finally captured He came face to face with his step brother Vyankōji at a place on the Coleroon about ten miles north of Tanjore The two brothers were together for a whole week Shivaji wanted Vyankōji to give up half the lands and property left by their father, to which Vyankōji did not agree and left unseen on a raft to Tanjore⁹¹ The die had now been cast, and in a single sweep Shivaji succeeded in occupying Kōlār, Bangalore, Hoskōt, Bālāpūr, Arnī and Sirā, while he imposed *chauth* and *sardēshmukhī* on the Bijapur possessions and when refused, plundered them Vyankōji had no alternative but to bow to the reality and, at the instance of his wife Dīpā Bāi agreed to the partition of half his father's assets The districts of Bangalore, Hoskōt and Sirā were regranted to Vyankōji on behalf of Shivaji But while on the one hand Shivaji kept his hold on the conquered territory by appointing Janārdan Narāyan Hanumantē as its administrator, he

90 For details see Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, "Abul Hasan Qutub Shah and his Ministers", *JIH*, X, 1931, pp 109 ff, Sardesai, *op cit*, X Fall of Vellore, August 1678, Sarkar, *Shivaji*, 387 *Sabhasad*, 83-86 *Foreign Biographies of Shivaji*, Intr, xlv-xlvi

91 Edwardes, the editor of Grant Duff's *History of the Marathas* says in a footnote on p 218 "Shivaji wished to treat the estate as the undivided property of Shāhji, and by applying to it the Hindu law of inheritance to obtain half share as Shāhji's son This view failed to recognize the fact that after Shāhji's death the estates had been regranted in their entirety to Vyankōji by the Bijapur government "

broke his plight with the Sultān of Golkonda by not ceding any portion of the conquests to him as agreed to at Hyderabad. The administration at Hyderabad naturally slipped away and once again joined hands with Bijapur.

Historians are not unanimous on Shivaji's object at Karnatak campaign. Whether it is 'land' or 'gold' that motivated Shivaji to undertake this task is the main point of dispute among the scholars. Jadunath Sarkar maintains that the main object of Karnatak campaign was money, and that "it was an organised plunder and the whole Karnatak was peeled to the bones by Shivaji. Not land but gold was the main object of his campaign."

But the accounts of the chroniclers and other records, as pointed out above, show that he had permanent interests in the South. According to *Sabhasad*, this new territory fetched him a revenue of about 20 lakh hons a year, and it included a hundred forts. This means that neither retaliation nor plunder but permanent annexation formed the real object of Shivaji's Karnatak campaign. Shivaji had assured the French traders of Pondicherry that he intended to hold Karnatak for good. By this single sweep Shivaji was able to shut the gateway to the south for the Mughals, decimate the power of Bijapur in Karnatak and forge a wedge between the two remaining Sultānates of the Deccan, Bijapur and Hyderabad.

Shivaji and the Siddis of Janjira

Janjira (original name, Jazira or Island) is the name of a fortified island-town situated barely half a mile from the coast now in the Murud taluqa of Kolābā district, about forty five miles almost due south of Bombay. At the time of the rise of Marathas it was ruled by the Siddis of Habashi extraction and the original name of the settlement was *Jazira i Habashān*.

The Siddis hailed originally from Abyssinia and had settled in this island stronghold early in the seventeenth century. They were a tough race, and were supported in their successful endeavours against the Marathas first by the 'Adil Shāhis and then by the Mughals. Small in numbers, they had the grit of withstanding successfully the continuous onslaughts of the mighty army of the Marathas and not only remained independent right through the Shivaji period but actually harassed and occupied the hinterland and even the island of Bombay, lying outside the Fort, for nearly a year and a half.⁹²

We hear of the relations of the Siddis with Shivaji in 1658 when he constructed a number of forts on the mainland such as Sūrgarh, Talē and Ghōsalē which alarmed the Siddis, who had to "purchase Shivaji's friendship" by the cession of some territory on the mainland.⁹³ Two years later, in

92 For a general history of Janjira and the Siddis see B. K. Bhonsle, *Janjira Samasthāncha Itihās*. Also see S. N. Sen, *Siva Chhatrapati*.

93 Sardesai, *op cit*, 121.

December 1660, we find Siddi Jauhar actually helping the army of Bijapur encircling Panhālā where Shivaji had shut himself up, and, as has been noted above, it was with difficulty that he could escape to Vishālgaṛh⁹⁴ Shivaji's main object in this part of the coast was to dislodge the Siddis from their eerie so that he might claim mastery over the whole of the Konkan coast. His difficulty was a continuous one as the Siddis paid homage to Bijapur which recognized their chief as admiral of their fleet, while, with the decay of the 'Ādil Shāhī administration and the growing influence of the Mughals on the western coast they were similarly recognised admirals of the Mughal fleet. Thus, apart from their grit and nonchalance they had the backing either of Bijapur or the Empire as the case might be.

Realising the difficulty of dislodging the Siddis, Shivaji tried to deliver the island fort to their chief, offered him a mansab and threatened dire consequences in case of refusal. But there was no response and the confrontation continued⁹⁵. It is remarkable that while Shivaji was able to subdue the whole of the Canara Coast belonging to the 'Ādil Shāhīs by the middle of 1675 he could not subdue the small island situated almost at a stone's throw from the mainland, and this very proximity was a menace to Shivaji's possessions. They frequently carried raids into Konkan for plunder and were a constant menace to his subjects⁹⁶. As Balkrishna says, "We cannot but admire the spirited defence of the Siddis in the long struggle which lasted about a quarter of a century. It is indeed strange that the one who had swallowed a large part of the Bijapur kingdom, who had shaken the foundations of the Mughal Empire, should have been baffled in capturing the castle of Janjirā after so many heroic efforts"⁹⁷. He rightly ascribes this failure to the Siddis' superiority in naval equipment and says that Shivaji's light vessels could not break "the cordon of big battleships nor stand the heavy fire of more than three hundred cannon firing from the battlements of Janjirā".

This is strange as Shivaji had been able to occupy Danda-Rājpurī as early as 1659⁹⁸ and at least he could bombard effectively the defences of Janjirā. Nothing appeared easier than to cut off Janjirā from the mainland, but whenever this was attempted the Siddis would in return side-track the Marathas and with their naval equipments raid the unprotected parts of the mainland. The patience of Shivaji had passed its limits and in 1665 he invaded Janjirā with great force, but failed. In fact a few years later the Siddis were able to dislodge the Marathas from Dandā. No doubt encouraged

94 For the details of Shivaji's dealings with the Siddis at Panhālā see Grant Duff, *op cit*, pp 141-2. Grant Duff, 174 calls Janjirā "Impregnable".

95 *Factory Records, Surat*, LXXXVIII, 21 May 1674.

96 *Sabhasad*, 83.

97 Balkrishna, *Shivaji the Great*, II, 373.

98 S. N. Sen, *op cit*, 89 ff.

by the fortitude of the Siddis, Aurangzeb ordered the Governor of Surat to send thirty-six ships to their help. It is reported that the combined naval force of the Mughals and the Siddis created great havoc on the coast and sank a number of Shivaji's ships by gunfire.⁹⁹

The three years, 1673 to 1676, were taken up by repeated attempts of Shivaji to reduce Janjirā, and though some of these attempts were partially successful Shivaji could not subjugate the Siddis. It appears that he became alive to the capacity of Muslims in naval warfare and enrolled such captains as Daulat Khān in his service. But in a naval engagement between the Marathas and the Siddis at Satvālī both the warring commanders, Siddi Sumbul and Daulat Khān were wounded. The Marathas were victorious and Shivaji followed this victory by further gains. But the Siddis were adamant and the reinforcement sent under the Pēshwā Mōrōpant was not of much avail except that the Marathas were able to occupy Khandērī island, thirty miles north of Janjirā. The Marathas now tried to fortify the island in August 1679 but the English successfully precluded them from completing the project although they continued to fortify by stages.¹⁰⁰ In a skirmish with the Siddis in January 1680 the Marathas lost heavily. The death of Shivaji left the Siddis unchecked.¹⁰¹

On succeeding his father, Sambhājī tried to curb the power of the Siddis. For two long years, from 1680 to 1682, he made frantic efforts to take Janjirā but failed. The island was barely 800 yards from the mainland, and early in 1682 Sambhājī tried to construct a causeway across the channel by filling it with stones and earth, but failed to make much of an impression.¹⁰² He even tried to meet the Siddis' fleet at sea but failed. He followed in the footsteps of his father by employing Siddis themselves in his fleet, for a whole Maratha squadron was commanded by Siddi Mişrī when the Maratha fleet fought the Siddis' fleet at Bombay in October 1681.¹⁰³ On this occasion the Janjirā fleet was commanded by the ruler of Janjirā, Siddi Yāqūt. Mişrī was mortally wounded while the defenders played havoc with the Maratha fleet.¹⁰⁴

The next we hear of the Siddis was in 1689 when Aurangzeb ordered them to suppress piracy on the high seas by "interlopers" who began to plough

99 Sarkar, *Shivaji*, 366 ff

100 *English Records on Shivaji* (henceforth *ERS*), ed. Paranjpe and Kale II, 227, 234. *Factory Records, Bombay*, VIII, 28. The English Factors call the Chief of Janjirā, 'Admiral of the King of India's fleet.'

101 Shivaji's failure on the Siddi affair was partly due to the lack of a strong navy, but mainly to the hostile attitude of the British, the Portuguese and the Mughals in his operations against the Siddis.

102 B. K. Bhonsle, *Janjirā*, 46-54, *Grant Duff*, *op cit*, 239-41.

103 *Factory Reports Surat*, 90. *Grant Duff*, 240, puts the attack on Bombay in 1682.

104 *Ibid*, 241.

the high seas almost in opposition to the East India Company Yāqūt Khān attacked Bombay and made himself master of Mazagāon, Sion and Māhim in February 1689. He was master of the island outside the Fort for a whole year and did not leave till June 1690¹⁰⁵

Sambhājī was killed in 1689. Like Shivaji he tried his best in many ways to overcome the Siddis, but like him he failed. In the end he had to be satisfied with controlling the littoral to some extent, while the island of Janjīrā was left high and dry during the period under review.

The Portuguese and the Marathas

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the Mughals had already entered the Deccan and they were gradually bringing the Deccan powers within their fold. The only European power then having any political ambition were the Portuguese. The Portuguese came to India in the first instance as traders in search of spices, but later they acquired territory by conquest or cession till they had occupied Goa and a strip of territory from Daman to Chaul. Vasco da Gama's primary object was to manipulate trade routes from Portugal to India, but Affonso de Albuquerque's occupation of Goa in 1510 opened out a new vista for the Portuguese. Chaul was fortified in 1521, Diu in Gujarat was occupied in 1534, Daman on the Maharashtra-Gujarat border acquired in 1558-60. Bahādur Shāh of Gujarat ceded Bassein and the coastal strip (including Salsette, Trombay, Karanja, Elephanta and Bombay), and the whole district was constituted into the Northern Province of the Portuguese Dominions with a Captain General in charge. It was only on the advent of the other European powers on the scene and the rise of the Maratha State that they had to recede. About the middle of the seventeenth century they were virtually replaced on the Coromandal Coast by the Dutch, the British and the French, while on the Western Coast, Bombay was ceded to the English Crown in 1661, and they were ousted from Cochin and Cannanore by the Dutch in 1663.

While they were in occupation of the Konkan strip they naturally came in contact with the Marathas and tried to exercise some influence on their politics. But their policy was neither consistent nor clean. When Shivaji was at war with the Mughals about the beginning of 1663, the Portuguese Viceroy de Castro flirted both with Shivaji and the Mughals. While he wished success to Shivaji, and wrote to the Captain General of the North not to allow any provisions to reach the Mughal camp, he also wrote to the Mughal commander Jai Singh saying that peace and friendship existed between the King of Portugal and the Mughal Emperor and informing him that orders had been sent to the Captain General of the North not to give any help to

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid* 274-76, on p. 276, n.1 reference is made to a letter from Bombay to the Court of Directors, dated January 25, 1689 (not 1698 which is an obvious misprint).

Shivaji! Again, while in 1669 they wanted to give full help to the Siddis of Janjirā, the next year they entered into a treaty with the Marathas promising them that they would not give "refuge or provisions of any kind to the Habashis"

The question of the capture of small boats plying in the creeks and along the shore, and the problem of political asylum to renegades and refugees also featured in this struggle. The Sawants of Wāi, who refused to accept the supremacy of Shivaji, sought refuge under the Portuguese in 1667 regarding this and other matters. In 1675 Shivaji captured the fort of Phondā from them and brought the adjoining territory under his control. He occupied Daman in 1677, and demanded *Chauth* from the Portuguese, but it is not known whether any payment was ever made.¹⁰⁶

When Sambhājī succeeded his father Shivaji, things became even more acute and it is related that Aurangzeb actually sought the help of the Portuguese Viceroy, Conde de Alvor. In response to this the Viceroy wrote to the Captain of the North to allow Mughal forces pass through Portuguese territory against Sambhājī. This meant open war between the Marathas and the Portuguese. In April 1682 Sambhājī ransacked Portuguese possession in the north while the Portuguese retaliated by capturing Maratha vessels. The conflict evidently went on for a whole year, for it is related that the Marathas were able to seize an island barely two miles from Goa. The Viceroy was himself wounded in the fray, and not knowing "how few men there were in the island" Sambhājī left the Goa territory in December, 1683.

Shivaji and the English

Shivaji was no more than a 'raider,' or a 'plunderer,' or a 'rebel' or a 'Grand Rebel' to the English prior to the Afzal Khān episode. After that event they started seeking his favour.¹⁰⁷ Shivaji plundered the English factory at Rājāpūr in 1661 as the English tried to help his enemy Siddi Jauhar who had besieged Panhālā fort on behalf of the Sultān of Bijapur. As the English were secretly helping his enemies, he imprisoned three English factors and refused to release them without adequate ransom. The Surat Council did not support the Rājāpūr factors as they were imprisoned by Shivaji "not for defending Company's goods, it was for going to the siege of Panhālā and tossing balls with a flag that was known to be the English's."¹⁰⁸

During his first sack of Surat in 1664, Shivaji had no mind to disturb the Company. Still the Company took necessary precautions against all eventualities.¹⁰⁹ The English looked at Shivaji's activities with a mixed

106 Pissulencar, *Portuguese Maratha Sambandha* 75

107 ERS, I, document Nos 12, 13, 19 96 114

108 ERS, I, p 37

109 ERS, I, p 61

feeling of awe and respect. They respected him because he 'reigned victoriously and uncontrolled' in his region,¹¹⁰ and they were afraid of him because he was getting stronger and stronger every day. They were really happy when they heard that 'the Grand Rebel Shivaji is at last entrapped'¹¹¹ by the Mughals at Agra. But soon they got the news that he had escaped and reached his own territories.¹¹²

After Shivaji's escape from Agra the English became more friendly with him and secured a promise from him that he would do them no wrong.¹¹³ The problem of indemnity for the plunder of Rājāpūr factory was discussed at length by several envoys and finally abandoned in despair by the English. However, they concluded in 1674 "peace, union and friendship between the noble prince Shivaji Rāja and the Honourable English East India Company." Henry Oxenden, the English envoy, who attended the coronation ceremony of Shivaji in 1674, gives a graphic account of the celebrations. Oxenden was accompanied by two other Englishmen, Robinson and Michell. As Shivaji was away at Pratāpgarh to worship at the Bhavānī temple there they were received by Nīrāji Pandit. On 22 May 1674 they were ordered to ascend the steep hill to the "top of that strong mountain which is fortified by nature more than art ... Our house was about a mile from the Raja's palace." Oxenden did not attend the ceremony for pleasure only but carried on conversation with Shivaji based on trade and commerce in which the English were interested. On 29 May Shivaji was weighed in gold which was added on to a hundred thousand pagodas and distributed among the Brahmans. Oxenden describes the ceremony and says that when the Englishmen were ushered into Shivaji's presence he was already seated on the Throne. On each side were hung "on heads of gilded lances many emblems, on one side two great fish's heads and on the other many horses' tails, while a pair of golden scales hung overhead."¹¹⁴ It is significant that English accepted Shivaji as the greatest diplomat in the eastern part of the known world.¹¹⁵

Shivaji's Relations with the French and the Dutch

Shivaji's relations with these two European powers were purely commercial in nature. He purchased guns and lead from the French for use against the Siddis, as he had failed to get supplies from the English.¹¹⁶ The French had

110 ERS, I, p. 92.

111 ERS, I, p. 114.

112 ERS, I, p. 117.

113 Sarkar, *Shivaji*, 170.

114 See *Foreign Biographies of Shivaji*, 456-61, 467-68.

115 ERS, I, p. 199.

116 ERS, I, pp. 307, 309.

secured a farmān from Shivaji to trade freely in all his ports,¹¹⁷ and had settled in Rājāpūr before 1668¹¹⁸ They remained neutral when Surat was sacked by the Marathas in 1670¹¹⁹

The Dutch factory at Vengurlā was not disturbed by Shivaji during his raids in south Konkan in 1664¹²⁰ Shivaji, with a view to securing a balance of power between the English and others was keeping the French and the Dutch satisfied and contented in his areas He threatened the English that he would assist the Dutch in destroying Bombay, but he never fulfilled the threat¹²¹ He was therefore, regarded by the English as their "fairest friend and noblest enemy."¹²²

Thus it seems that Shivaji strove to maintain friendly relations with those European powers whose professed policy was not political aggrandisement He was against the Portuguese as they indulged in religious conversion as well as political dominance

Administration

Shivaji not only founded the Maratha State, but also attempted to make it enduring by giving a system of administration based on tradition He has therefore been regarded as one of the greatest constructive statesmen of Medieval India¹²³

(1) Provincial Administration

The kingdom was divided into three major divisions called prānts

- (a) Northern Division, which included the area between Salhēr (Nāsik District) and Poona, and a part of Konkan, up to about 100 miles north of Bombay,
- (b) Middle Division, which included the country below the ghāts called Talaghāt and Konkan south of Bombay up to Bhātkaḷ,
- (c) Southern Division, which included the region above the ghāts called Varghāt or Dēsh, from south of Poona to Kōpbal near the Tungabhadra¹²⁴

117 ERS, I, p 128

118 MIS, VIII, 8

119 Being ignorant of this fact, Grant Duff, *op cit*, I, Ch 8 193, writes "the French purchased an ignominious neutrality by permitting Shivaji's troops to pass through their factory."

120 Sen, *op cit*, fn p 200

121 ERS, I, p 240

122 ERS, II, p 71

123 Sarkar, *Shivaji*, 115

124 This formed a solid block of territory Shivaji also owned certain parts in South India including areas round Bellāry and Kōpbal, as well as his patrimony round Bangalore, Shimōgā and Tanjore He held Singnapūr as his In'am village, the fort of Parṇā near Daman, a great part of Baglānā and some fortresses as far north as South Khān-dēsh Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, p 103 ff, Grant Duff, *op cit*, 231

An officer of the status of a Minister called *Sarkārūkun* was appointed to administer each Division. These Divisions were further subdivided into districts, of which there were 14, such districts which were under a *sūbahdār*, assisted by *Majumdārs* (Ma mū'ahdārs) in audit and accounts matters. A *mahāl* was a subdivision of the district and was placed under the charge of a *havaladār* (*hawāladār*). Hereditary officers, like *dēshmukhs* and *dēshpandēs* of the *parganā* which was a group of villages, and *Pātils* and *Kulkārnis* of the villages helped the State in village and *parganā* administration.

(ii) Central Administration

Shivaji assumed the crown and the title *Chhatrapati* in 1674. The council of eight ministers called *Ashta Pradhān Mandal* or Council of Eight Chiefs, which was appointed on this occasion, had its modest beginning in the group of advisers nominated by Shāhji, probably after 1642, to guide Shivaji in administering his *jāgīr*. Originally there were only four such Advisers but by 1674 the number was doubled. The eight ministers in this council in that year were* —

- 1 The Mukhya Pradhān (Pēshwā) or Prime Minister
Mōrōpant Pinglē
- 2 The Amātya (Majumdār or Majmū'ahdār), Revenue Minister
Nārō Nilakanth and Rāmachandra Nilakanth
- 3 The Sachiv (Shūrā navīs), in charge of royal correspondence
Annāji Dattō
- 4 The Mantri (Wāqnīs or Waqā'navīs) or Record Keeper, and
Personal Adviser Dattaji Trimbak
- 5 The Sēnāpati (Sani Naubat) or Commander in Chief Hambir
Rāo Mōhite
- 6 The Sumanta (Dabir) or Foreign Minister Rāmachandra
Trimbak
- 7 The Nyāyādhiśha (Qāzlu'l Quzāt) or Chief Justice Nirāji
Rāoji
- 8 The Pandit Rāo (Sadaru s Sudūr) or Ecclesiastical head Rāyaji
Rāo Rāoji¹²⁵

These ministers were paid according to the nature of the duties assigned to them. The Prime Minister drew about 15,000 hons, the Amātya about 12,000 hons, and the last six ministers about 10,000 hons per annum.¹²⁶

*[The names in brackets were the original names of these officers and smacked of Perso-Arabic influence but were changed by Shivaji to Sanskritised forms. Ed.]

125 *Sabhasad*, p. 81-82.

126 Chitnis, *Life of Shivaji* ed. K. N. Sane Poona, 1924 pp. 342-43

(iii) *The Fighting Forces*

Apart from the modest naval force which Shivaji organised, there were three wings of the fighting forces, namely infantry, regular cavalry and irregular raiders, in order of the preference that was given. The lowest unit of cavalry consisted of a group of twenty-five under a *hanāladār* while above him were *jumlādār*, the *hazārī*, the *panchhazārī* and the *sarnaubat* of the cavalry. Among the troopers were the *silahdār* who brought his own mount and equipment, and the *bārgir* who received his mount and equipment from the State. It is noted that there were seven hundred pathāns who had left Bijapur service and joined the Maratha army. The Māvlē infantry was under similar officers but its lowest unit consisted of five soldiers under a *nāyak*. The cavalry was always light, and as Martin says it was "without pomp, without women and there were no baggages"¹²⁷ According to *Sabhāsad* the total strength of Shivaji's army was 2,08,260 including his bodyguard. Of these there were 60,000 *silahdārs* under 31 chief officers, 45,000 *pāgā* under 29 chief officers, 1,00,000 *māvlēs* under 35 colonels, and 1260 elephants¹²⁸

While Shivaji's military machine was second to none his navy lacked strength, and he could not cope even with the grit of a small state like Janjirā. As has been noted above, some of his naval vessels were officered by Muslims. His naval force consisted of four hundred 'ghurābs,' 'tārandēs' 'tārūs,' 'galbāts,' 'shibāds' and 'pagārs,' organised into two squadrons of two hundred vessels each. Although he was a pioneer in naval activity he did not give his navy the importance that it deserved, perhaps because it was mainly the land powers which he had to face*.

Forts

Deccan is a land of strongholds. Grant Duff rightly says that "from a military point of view, there is probably no stronger country in the world" than the Maratha region.¹²⁹ The Maratha State paid special attention to the maintenance of forts and strongholds. The *Adnyāpatra*, an early eighteenth century treatise on Maratha polity, written by the Amātya Rāmachandra Pant Bandēkar, not only underlines the importance of forts, but also gives

127 Sen, *Foreign Biographies of Shivaji*, 306 and 316, Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, 6. It should be noted that, different to the Mughals, Shivaji did not allow women of any description to accompany the Maratha army.

128 *Sabhāsad*, 45, 97-100.

*[Sarkar, *Shivaji and his Times*, 258, says that Shivaji "knew that without naval supremacy his position even as a land power would be precarious," but this only shows that he regarded his navy as a branch of his military forces, and here he perhaps made the same mistake as Napoleon made towards the end of the eighteenth century. Ed.]

129 Grant Duff, *op cit*, I, 8.

instructions regarding their construction and efficient administration ¹³⁰ Shivaji had in his possession about 240 forts and he spent lavishly on their construction, repairs and renovation. Each fort was placed under three officers of equal status called hawāladar, Sarnaubat and Sabnis (Sarfā navis) who were expected to act in unison. The Karkhānis (Kārkhānā navis) was in charge of the stores of the fort ¹³¹

(iv) Economic Policy

It is sometimes alleged that the Marathas in general neglected the economic aspect of the State ¹³². This is certainly not true of Shivaji's times. The colonisation of the desolated areas and the promotion of agriculture, industry and trade during this period, bear testimony to the efforts made by him in securing sound economic basis for his newly created State.

The major sources of income for the state were land revenue, taxes, chauth and sardēshmukhī and occasionally the spoils of war. As the name implies, Chauth was a tax amounting to one fourth of the revenue realised by the State on which it was levied. Although there are instances of its levy in other parts of India before Shivaji, it may be said to have been levied systematically by him. It was a tax in lieu of possible plunder of the territory in question by the Marathas only, and as it did not come automatically within Shivaji's rule he did not give it further protection from all others. It was levied mainly on Mughal provinces under the pretext that it was needed to provide against the aggression of the Mughals themselves. Chauth usually brought about 80 lakh hons per year?

Sardēshmukhī was a conventional levy of 10 per cent imposed by the Marathas on the whole revenue of the ṣūbā and was based on the supposed principle that Shivaji was the hereditary sardēshmukh of the province. This was claimed for the first time in 1648. As against chauth, sardēshmukhī was regarded as a matter of right. Sabhāsad has estimated it at one crore hons ¹³³

Land was measured and classified as first class, second class, third class and waste land according to its fertility, and irrigated and non irrigated land. The quality of the soil, the area under crop, the crops cultivated, the type of irrigation, facilities used, etc., determined the rate of assessment. Land revenue was collected both in cash and kind. Shivaji introduced, at least in some parts of his State, the system of Raṭṭī settlement, i.e., total produce

¹³⁰ *Adnyāpatra* ed. G. H. Khare and S. R. Bhude. Poona 1960, chapter VIII. [The *Adnyāpatra* was published under the orders of Sambhaji of Kolhāpūr in November 1716. It was the work of Rāmachandra Pant who had served Shivaji and his immediate descendants as Amātya. Ed.]

¹³¹ *Sabhāsad* p. 22.

¹³² Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 381.

¹³³ *Sabhāsad* 107.

of the land to be equally shared by the State and the cultivator. Under this system, the cultivator was not expected to pay other taxes ¹³⁴

As the wealth of the State depended on agriculture and industry, Shivaji made every effort to promote the economic interests of the State by protecting and providing facilities to the agriculturists and artisans

Like Malik 'Ambar, he endeavoured to create a definite interest among the tiller in the soil he tilled. He established direct relationship between the king and the peasant-proprietor by abolishing intermediaries ¹³⁵ Instructions were issued to provide all facilities such as cattle, seed, interest free loans etc to the needy cultivators. He instructed his officers that they should induce the cultivators to bring more land under the plough, and that they should not expect anything from them by way of bribes ¹³⁶ With a view to bring more land under cultivation, the new lands were to be assessed at a progressive scale called Istawa, the maximum revenue reaching only on the expiry of eight years ¹³⁷

Shivaji's attitude towards the *Watan* needs consideration. Some historians are of opinion that he abolished the watan system altogether. In this respect the *watan* tenure should be distinguished from other types of tenures like *In'am*, *Muqasā* etc. *Watan* is a hereditary service tenure, and the *watandar* is a person who holds rent free land in perpetuity in lieu of his services towards the village community. On the other hand *In'am* is a grant of land, not necessarily rent-free, made for the services rendered by the holder of the land in the past. *Muqasā*, *Jat* or *Saranjam* is a military service tenure which is temporary in character. The system of *watan* was a political institution well-suited to the conditions of life in medieval period when means of communication were few, and there was paucity of educated persons who could transact efficiently the business of the state. It would therefore have been impolitic on Shivaji's part to have abolished the institution altogether. He continued old *watans*, created new ones and confiscated the estates of those who failed in the duties of their station. He reformed the system by making the *watandars* aware of their duties towards the village communities. In short, he endeavoured to work with them rather than against them ¹³⁸

Salt making was the major industry of the Konkan region of his kingdom. But the industry was severely affected by competition from the salt produced in the Portuguese territory of Goa. Shivaji realised the danger

¹³⁴ MIS, 15 340 *Jedhe Shakavaj* published, in *Shiva Charitra Pradeep*, eds., Apte and Divekar, 1925, p. 24

¹³⁵ *Ibid*

¹³⁶ SCS, 9 55

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 8 26

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11, 220, SPD, 31 38, MIS, 16, 28

involved and gave protection to salt-industry by imposing heavy tariffs, thus preventing the salt merchants of the Dēsh areas to trade with the Portuguese ¹³⁹

The Konkan region had some flourishing trading centres during Shivaji's time. Chaul, Dābhōl, Kalyān, Bhivandī, Vengurlā, Rājāpūr, Peṇ, and other places have been frequently referred to as prosperous commercial and industrial centres. Chaul was a great mart for all Deccan commodities and was famous for its silk-industry. Dābhōl was one of the most affluent and populous ports in western India, full of fine buildings, superb temples and old mosques ¹⁴⁰. Kalyān and Bhivandī grew timber useful for ship-building. Shivaji located his ship-building industry in these areas. Rājāpūr, another commercial centre, had many rich merchants whose ships carried on a brisk trade with the ports on the Red Sea and the Persian gulf, and on the Indian coast ¹⁴¹.

Shivaji adopted a liberal and generous religious policy towards all. His grants did not make discrimination between Hindus and Muslims. Holy men of the Muslim community received allowances for maintenance, illumination, and upkeep of their mosques ¹⁴². Hindus received grants of lands for performing spiritual duties.

Shivaji also gave patronage to learning. The maths and temples, to which extensive grants were made, were also schools where religious knowledge was imparted. The Pandit Rāo, member of the Council of Ministers, was authorised to receive scholars of reputation and reward them liberally for their attainments.

General Estimate

Shivaji did not live long after his return from the South in 1678. Sambhājī, his eldest son, had deserted him and joined Dilēr Khān the Mughal Commander in 1678, and even helped him to capture Bhūpālgarh in 1679. Shivaji was making efforts to win back his son, and his people at last succeeded in bringing Sambhājī to the Maratha fold about the close of 1679. The strain of campaigns and administration told on his health and hastened his end. He was taken ill and, after a short illness, died on 5 April 1680, leaving behind him (eight) ~~sons~~, two sons and six daughters ¹⁴³.

Within the short period of time at his disposal, Shivaji not only organised the Maratha nation, but endeavoured to attain its multifold development. The

¹³⁹ *MIS*, 8, 27

¹⁴⁰ *Bombay Gazetteer*, I, part 2, p. 33

¹⁴¹ *The Travels of Abbe Carre in India*, etc. ed. Fawcett, London, 1947-48, I, 28

¹⁴² *Sanad Patra* ed. Vaid Mawaji and Parasnis, Bombay, 1913, pp. 102-3, *SCS*, 7, 55, *Selections from Peshwa Daftar*, ed. Sardesai (henceforth referred to as *SPD*), XXI, 18, *Sabhāsad*, 27

¹⁴³ Sardesai, *op. cit.*, I, 267-8 —

Maratha State owed its existence to his constructive genius. The momentum he gave enabled the nascent Maratha State to survive the periods of storm and stress through which it had to pass after his death. He had succeeded in endowing his people with grit and spirit of reliance which enabled them to rise in spite of heavy odds.

It is sometimes argued that there was no political ideal behind the foundation of the Maratha State, and the cohesion of the people was not organic but artificial, accidental and therefore precarious, it was a government of personal discretion, and hence full of uncertainties, it neglected the economic factor, and hence it had no stable basis, no normal means of growth within itself, it was thus essentially a Kriegstaat, a War-State¹⁴⁴

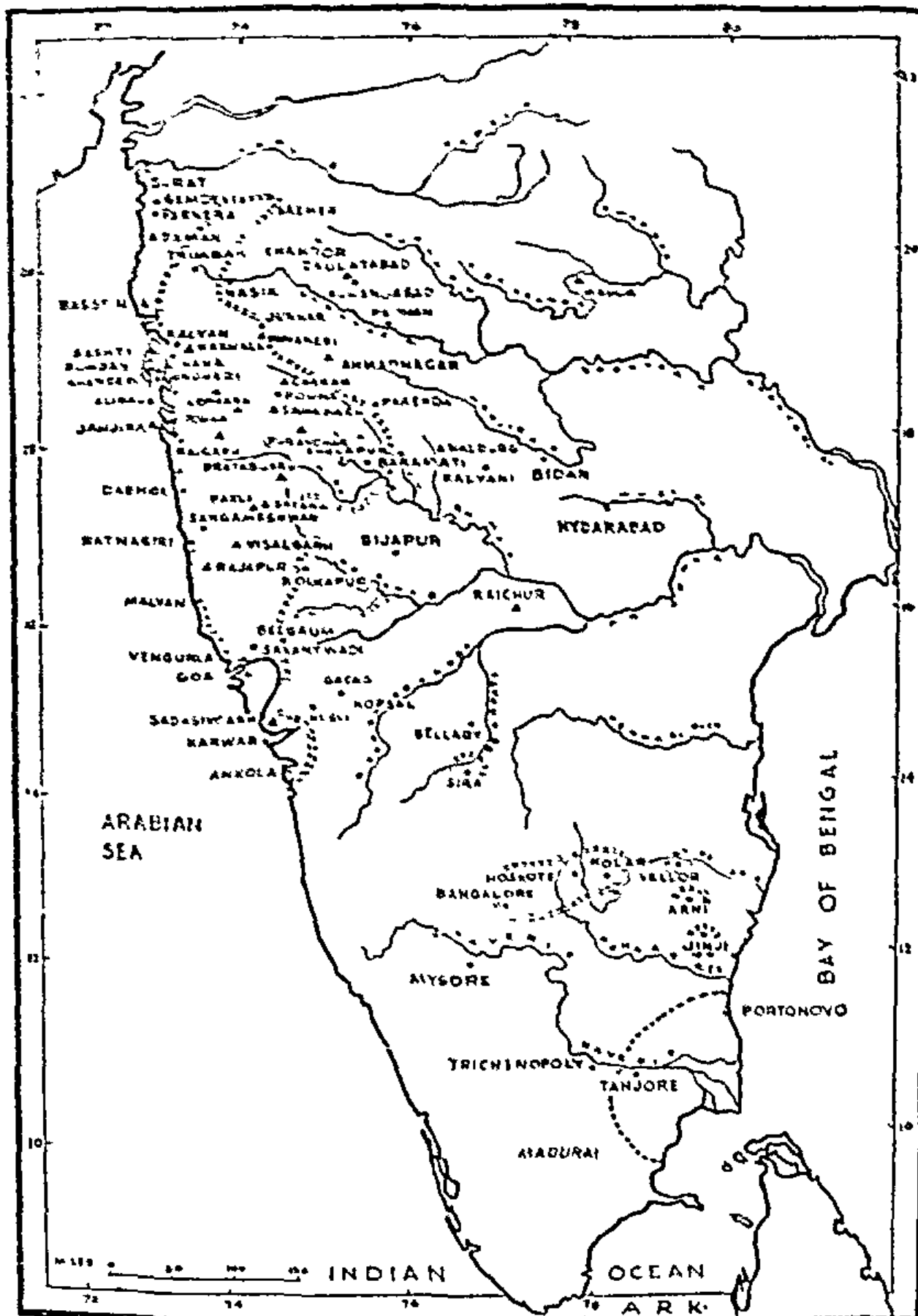
This view does not tell the whole truth. The earlier discussion about his administration and economic policy would prove that the State founded by him was not merely a War State or that it neglected economic factors. The organisation that he set up withstood all calamities. Although there was no 'superman' to guide the destinies after his death, and particularly after 1689, yet the Maratha State successfully tided over this trying period and proved that the cohesion of the Maratha people was not artificial or accidental but genuine. Shivaji never made his state a personal affair but always depended on his associates and the institutions that he had set up.

The efforts made by Shivaji in settling the territory, in improving the economy of the State that had emerged out of the great famine by promoting agriculture, in protecting and developing industry, in collecting good people around him and appealing to their latent qualities, in creating jobs for the talented, in encouraging learning by generous grants, all this fully explains the political ideals and policy of the Maratha State. It was a self governing entity created for the people of the region by Shivaji and sustained by their will and determination.

6 Shivaji's Successors

(i) Sambhaji (1680-1689)

Shivaji left a number of wives, one of whom, Sāī Bāī who was Sambhaji's mother, died when the child was only two years old. After her death Sōyarā Bāī became Shivaji's helpmate and favourite. Sambhaji was born in 1657, was nominated heir to the Maratha throne when he was only a child, and, as has been stated above, accompanied Shivaji to Agra where he was made a mansabdār of 5000 by the Emperor. Shivaji was not happy with his son's conduct both owing to his moral laxity and his wanton defection to Dīlār Khān the Mughal Commander in December 1678 when his mansab was raised by the Emperor to 7000. This was like a stab in the back to Shivaji. When Sambhaji at last



KINGDOM OF SHIVAJI - 1680

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|-------|
| ---- | SHAHJI'S SWARAJ | ▲ | FORTS |
| | VYANKOJI'S TERRITORY | ● | TOWNS |

these areas. But Sambhājī was hit in the back by the Sāwants and Dēsāis of Konkan who did not support him and actually joined hands with the Portuguese. As ill luck would have it, the Mughal forces arrived in Konkan in December 1683, and hemmed in on all sides. Sambhājī had to give up his forward move. He returned to Rājgarh in January 1684, entrusted the peace negotiations with the Portuguese to Prince Akbar and appointed Kalasha to represent the Marathas. Thus circumstances forced Sambhājī to conclude peace with the Portuguese early in 1684. It was decided that Sambhājī should give up "all lands and fortresses" in the north taken from the Portuguese and return all the prisoners of war, while on their part the Portuguese should return the prisoners of war in their hands and chauth for Daman and the "Gaon Candit" of Bassein should be paid to Sambhājī.¹⁴⁷

Bijapur and Golkonda were avoiding any major military operation against the Marathas. These two states were, however, annexed by the Mughals, who were now free to seize the southern provinces of these two Sultānates which had passed into the hands of the Marathas. Sambhājī was aware of the probable danger from the Mughals and was preparing to meet the challenge to his authority. In 1685 he issued an appeal to the dēshmukhs and other waṭandārs to unite against the Mughals and help him to resist the Emperor. He was confident that if all the Marathas united and attacked the Mughals, they would have the upper hand.¹⁴⁸

But it was unfortunate that Sambhājī could not succeed in consolidating his power and attacking Aurangzeb when he was struggling hard against the Deccan Sultānates. Instead he wasted his time, and was caught unawares at Sangamēshwar along with his associate Kalasha.

But when Aurangzeb's hands were comparatively free he sent an expedition to Karnatak, and the Mughals were able to occupy Poonamallee near Madras which was in Maratha occupation. In the west the impregnable Rājgarh was left to its fate and Kalasha prevailed upon Sambhājī "to exchange the shelter of Rājgarh to the comforts of Sangamēshwar" where Kalasha had built a mansion for himself. Here the Raja was lodged to eat, drink and be merry.

Aurangzeb was not slow to take advantage of this unfortunate situation. He ordered the siege of Panhālā and of the impregnable Rājgarh. Shaikh Nizām, who had defected from the Quṭb Shāhī service during the siege of Golkonda, heard of the state of affairs at Sangamēshwar, rode post haste and arrested Sambhājī while he was dead drunk. He was caught along with his associate Kalasha and brought before the Emperor at Vadū near Kōṭegāon.

147 Pissulencar, *Portuguese-Maratha Sambandha*, pp. 114-15.

148 *MIS*, 15, 342.

(Poona district). This was in December 1688. He was kept in confinement for a number of days, but his haughty and outrageous front enraged the Emperor and he ordered that his eyes be put out and he be put to death.¹⁴⁹

(E) *Rājārām's Regency (1689-1700)*

On Sambhājī's death the question of succession arose. He had left a widow Yēsū Bāi and a son Shivaji, and the Maratha chiefs considered him the rightful heir. There was then Rājārām, the great Shivaji's son by Sōyārā Bāi, who had given out that the Kingdom had been orally bequeathed to Rājārām by Shivaji. Thus a tussle for the throne was imminent. However cruel and intemperate Sambhājī might have been, the manner of his death ennobled him in the eyes of the Marathas and they made up their mind that they should stand united at this time of crisis. Rājārām had to unite the Marathas to a man to keep the torch of independence burning against the Mughals. Rājārām said that he was willing to act as regent for the young Shivaji, and swore that he would serve the Prince and the State. It was decided that there should be no coronation ceremony.

Rājārām's rule witnessed the continuance or revival of Maratha grit and heroism, while Aurangzeb's general I'tiqād Khān entitled Dhu'l-siqār Khān was making rapid progress in the Deccan. Dhu'l-siqār Khān besieged the Maratha capital Rāigadh, and after a bitter struggle of eight months, was able to capture it. This was "a terrible calamity" for the Marathas,¹⁵⁰ but the feeling was further enhanced by the capture of Yēsū Bāi and her son Shāhji. Yēsū Bāi must have had a pleasant surprise when she was received in the Emperor's zenānā by his second daughter Zinatu'n-nisā surnamed Bēgam Shāhibā, who addressed her as her own sister and Shahji as her own son. Shivaji was given the petname of Shāhū or "The Prince" by the Emperor, a name by which he continues to be known in history.¹⁵¹ Rājārām, however, managed to

149. Tradition has depicted Sambhājī as a violent spoilt child of an illustrious father, and too much addicted to drink and other vices. A modern historian, Ranade, who claims that a proper hearing was not given to Sambhājī at the bar of history, endeavours to remove some of the current ideas about him. It was felt for a while, when this young prince assumed power after silencing all opposition, that the Maratha State, founded by Shivaji would disappear. But that was not to be. Sambhājī not only defended the Maratha State while he was alive, but also inspired his people by sacrificing his life for a great cause. People emulated his patriotism and gave a determined resistance to the Emperor to avenge the murder of their master. The period that followed him has gone down in history as the most glorious period in the annals of the Maratha people. See Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Also see Bendre, *Chatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj*, Bombay, 1916, pp. 668-77.

150. Kincaid and Parasnis, *op. cit.*, II, 69.

151. "Shāhū," diminutive of "Shāh," meaning Prince, not "good one" as in Kincaid and Parasnis, *op. cit.*, II, 69.

escape. The submission of Rāigarh was followed by the occupation of Panhālā and Mīraj, which fell in April 1690.

Rājārām first made his way to Viśhālgaṛh, but foreseeing the weakness in its defences if Panhālā fell, left for Bangalore dressed as a priest, and finally to Jinjī where he had to stay from April 1690 to January 1698 when Jinjī fell to the Mughal General Dhu'l fiqār Khān. During these years Jinjī was the virtual capital of the Maratha State. With Shāhū in the Emperor's camp there was a danger of complacency among the Marathas, and Yēsū Bāi sent a message to Rājārām to assume the insignia of royalty and act as the ruler so long as Shāhū was not free. During this critical period Rājārām's counsellors were the Amātya Rāmachandra Pant, the Sachiv Shankar Narāyan, military captains Santajī Ghōrparē and Dhānājī Jādhav, "the two stars of dazzling brilliancy", and Pralhād Nirajī. Of these Rāmachandra Pant, who was granted the title of *Hukūmat Panāh* "Refuge of Government" was the genius behind Maratha activity in Maharashtra while Rājārām was locked up at Jinjī. He appealed to the *dēshmukhs* and other Maratha sardārs to cast off their differences and work for the promotion of Maharashtra Rājya and Maharashtra Dharma.¹⁵²

Rājārām departed from the policy laid down by Shivaji, of not granting any land in perpetuity for military services to the sardārs. But the exigencies of time forced him to adopt this line of action. The Mānēs of Mhaswad were permitted to capture Aurangābād, Nāndēd and Varhad and collect *Khāndānt* or "Family Dues" from those areas.¹⁵³ A conditional progressive grant was made to the Ghōrparees if they could capture Rāigarh, Bijapur, Hyderabad, Aurangābād, Delhi and other places.¹⁵⁴ A general circular directing to capture forts and be firm in their loyalty towards the State addressed to all the loyal *waṭandārs* was issued by the Amātya.¹⁵⁵ Many *Dēsāis* from Konkan and Karnatak deserted the Mughals and joined Rājārām.¹⁵⁶

Rājārām, unlike his father or brother, was not a strong ruler nor was he adept in the art of warfare. But he had the support of Maratha soldiers who rallied round him during this critical period of the war of independence. Aurangzeb underestimated the strength of the Marathas. A Maratha soldier, in his own region, was superior to a Mughal soldier who was fit for fighting in the plains. Thus the geographical factor was in favour of the Marathas. The hilly region, the deep valleys, the difficulties involved in transport and above all the guerilla tactics of the Marathas harassed and exhausted the

152. *MIS*, 15 347

153. *SCS*, 5 98

154. *SCS*, 5 11

155. *Raj*, 15 376

156. *Portuguese-Maratha Sambandh*, *op. cit.*, 130

Mughals The forts which had been captured by the **Mughals** with difficulty were recaptured by the **Marathas** in no time This rendered defence impossible for the **Mughals** The continuous warfare also lowered the morale of the **Mughal** army almost to a breaking point Away from home for years, and that too in a distant rugged land where prospects of success were bleak, the **Mughals** sometimes bought peace by bribing the **Marathas**

Curiously there was an internal rift in both the camps The Emperor was perhaps annoyed at the delay in the conquest of **Jinji** and sent his youngest son **Kām Bakhsh** as Commander, ordering the veteran **Dhu'l fiqār Khān** to serve under him This naturally told on the discipline of the investing forces and helped to prolong the siege On the other hand, a rivalry cropped up between **Santāji** and **Dhanāji** **Santāji** became proud of his successes on the battlefield and **Dhanāji** could not put up with his arrogance This resulted in a kind of civil war between the two **Dhanāji** was defeated in the first engagement but he was able to wreak vengeance on **Santāji**, who was taken unawares and murdered.

The siege of **Jinji** seemed to go on *ad infinitum* **Rājārām** took advantage of this rift in the **Mughal** camp and began secret negotiations with **Kām Bakhsh** But the plot was discovered and **Kām Bakhsh** was confined in the **Mughal** fort of **Wāndiwash**, leaving **Dhu'l-fiqār Khān** and his father **Asad Khān**, who had been sent by the Emperor on a special mission, in sole charge The see saw of the siege continued, fighting leading to conditions of truce, truce leading to renewed fighting " **Santāji** realised that with **Dhu'l fiqār Khān** in command it was impossible to raise the siege "¹⁵⁷ The blockade became strict preventing supplies to enter the town But treachery on the part of some officers in the **Mughal** camp had its way and **Rājārām** slipped out reaching **Vishālgarh** and then **Sinhgarh** in December 1697 ¹⁵⁸ A few days later, in January 1698, the **Mughal** forces occupied **Jinji**

Rājārām needed a capital as **Rājgarh** and **Jinji** had now been lost to the **Mughals** **Satāra** was selected by him in 1698 as the most convenient and suitable place as capital But even here he would have no rest Along with a number of eminent **Maratha** sardārs he moved northwards He deputed **Nēmāji Shinde** to ravage **Berar** levying **Chauth** and **Sardēshmukhī** on the way **Aurangzeb** saw the straits the **Mughal** army was in, and personally taking command, ordered the investment of **Satārā** itself which fell on 21 April 1700 But that was a month after **Rājārām's** death at the age of 30 on 2 March 1700 due to inflammation of the lungs and continued spitting of blood

¹⁵⁷ Kincaid and Parasnis *op cit*, II, 87

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, II, 88, for the treachery

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¹⁵⁷ Kincaid and Parasnis, *op cit*, II 87

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, II 88 for the treachery

(iii) *Tārā Bāi's Regency (1700-1707)*

Rājārām left three wives, two sons and a daughter. The elder of the two sons, Shivaji, was by Tārā Bāi, and was ten at the time of his father's death, while the younger, Sambhaji, was by Rājas Bāi and was only three then. Tārā Bāi was one of the most astute women rulers Medieval India had. She managed to bring a number of Maratha sardars to her side, silenced the protests of others who averred that the real ruler was Shāhū and Rājārām was, after all, only a regent. She made some notable changes in the ministerial council, put Rājas Bāi and her son Sambhaji in close confinement and raised Shivaji to the throne as Chhatrapati Shivaji III with his capital at Vishālgarh. But she was rarely seen taking life easy, and was moving from place to place, fortress to fortress as exigencies demanded.

In the meantime Aurangzeb had taken Parli and ordered the siege of Vishālgarh itself. Tārā Bāi was not there and the citadel was commanded by Parashurām Trimbak, who left it almost undefended, and Vishālgarh fell on 4 June 1702. This was followed by Sinhgarh in April 1703, Rājgarh in February 1704 and Törnā in March 1704. Evidently the Emperor had accomplished his object and captured the chief redoubts of the Marathas, but he had not killed the ardour of the race. He had to face the organising spirit of Tārā Bāi. Living the life of a common trooper, exposed to the sun, sleeping on the ground, Tārā Bāi was a great source of inspiration to the Marathas and it was mainly her determined opposition to the Mughals which hastened the failure of Aurangzeb. Tārā Bāi planned and executed the invasion of the Mughal western and central India, and the Maratha armies crossed the Narmada ravaging central India as far as Sironj, crossed the border of Gujarat and plundered the country as far as Ahmadābād.

This endless war undermined the morale of the Mughal army and the great forts of Parli, Panhālā, and Satārā were reoccupied by the Marathas while Sinhgarh, Rājgarh and Törnā were retaken in 1704-5. Prince Kām Bakhsh was permitted to open negotiations with the Maratha representative Dhanaji Jadhav. The basic conditions of peace submitted by Jadhav were the release of Shāhū and the levy of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in the Deccan provinces of the Empire. After lengthy negotiations the dialogue was discontinued.

It was not long after this, on 20 February 1707 that the old and worn out Emperor died at Ahmadnagar. His remains were taken to Khuldābād near Aurangābād and interred there in a simple grave.

Aurangzeb's death meant a complete change in the fortunes of the Empire. He was succeeded in the Deccan by Prince A'zam who was at his bed-side, but his eldest son Mu'azzam was at Kabul. He hurried to Lahore

and proclaimed himself Emperor with the title of Bahādur Shāh, seized Agra, defeated A'zam at Jājau near Agra and Kām Baksh a little later. He formally crowned himself at Delhi in February 1708.

(n) *Shāhū* (1708-1749)

The death of Aurangzeb gave a new turn to Mughal-Maratha relations. During the short period of his rule A'zam, with a view to reducing tension, as well as creating dissensions among the Marathas, decided to release Shāhū, who had been in Mughal captivity ever since 1689.

The return of Shāhū was received with mixed feeling in the Maratha country. Tārā Bāi opposed Shāhū tooth and nail. She was an ambitious woman, and was anxious to see that her son Shivaji had the upper hand. Her voice prevailed among the Marathas for some time as she proved a better administrator than her late husband Rājārām. She disliked the sympathetic and favourable dispositions of Dhanājī, Rāmachandra Pant Amātya and others towards Shāhū. She even declared Shāhū to be an imposter and that he was not Sambhājī's son at all, and appealed to the people not to join him. Many Maratha sardars sided with Tārā Bāi as Shāhū had agreed to rule as a feudatory of the Empire while A'zam had granted him chauth and sardēshmukhī over the six Mughal sūbās, viz., Khāndēsh, Berar, Aurangābād, Bidar, Hyderabad and Bijapur. A civil war ensued in the Maratha country after the release of Shāhū. The halo of martyrdom round Shāhū's father Sambhājī drew to him many partisans. Also they were not enamoured of the mentally feeble Shivaji, Rājārām's son, whom Tārā Bāi had placed on the Maratha throne. Shāhū, therefore, gathered a good following and he could win a decisive victory against the forces of Tārā Bāi in the battle of Khēd near Poona in 1707. Even on the battlefield he won Dhanājī Jadhav, Khandō Ballāl and other leaders to his side. After defeating Tārā Bāi, Shāhū marched through Chākan and Poona, and forced the Tārā Bāi faction holding Chandan-Wandan to surrender it, followed by Satārā, Parli and other forts. Shāhū then made Satārā his capital and celebrated his formal coronation on 12 January 1708.

Dhanājī died in July 1708 and his son Chandrasen defected to Tārā Bāi. But Shāhū found a new supporter in Bālājī Vishwanāth who was destined to play an important role in Maratha history.

Shāhū's accession did not put an end to civil war in the Maratha country. After her defeat at the battle of Khēd in 1707, Tārā Bāi fled to Panhālā and started sowing seeds of dissensions among the Maratha chiefs like Ghōrparēs, Chāvans, Dabhadēs and Thōrats. Shāhū invested Panhālā, but Tārā Bāi had, in the meanwhile abandoned it and left for Rāngana, and from there to Majvan. Panhālā was captured by Shāhū's forces but Rāngana proved to be a tough line. He returned to Satārā in June 1708 as the monsoon was fast approaching.

Tārā Bāi returned to Panhālā and made it the seat of her government in 1710. Shāhū gave up chasing Tārā Bāi for some time and diverted his attention towards other problems. He recaptured Rājgarh from the Sachiv in 1711. But Tārā Bāi had to face many other difficulties. Her son Shivaji, whom she had raised to the throne, died in 1712, and Rājas Bāi, the second wife of Rājārām, succeeded in removing Tārā Bāi from administration and placing her own son Sambhājī on the throne. This event is known as 'Palace Revolution' in the history of Kolhāpūr and it is alleged that Rāmachandra Pant Amātya, who later on wrote the famous treatise on polity "Adnyāpatra" at the instance of Sambhājī of Kolhāpūr, was behind this conspiracy. Thus ended the rule of Tārā Bāi. Rājas Bāi constantly demanded independent status for Sambhājī which was ultimately recognised in 1731 by the Treaty of Warana concluded by the Pēshwā Bājī Rāo I.

7 The Peshwas

(i) Bālaji Vishwanāth, 1713-20

The early history of Bālājī is still shrouded in mystery. He belonged to the Dēshmukh family of Shrivardhan and was employed to supervise the working of salt-pans at Chiplūn owned by the Siddis. It seems that his family migrated to the Poona region about 1672 during the last days of Shivaji. For some time he worked as a scribe under Rāmachandra Pant Amātya, then as *Sarsūbāh* of the districts of Poona and Daulatābād, and as revenue collector for Dhanājī Jādhav. He championed the cause of Shāhū along with his master Dhanājī and was appointed *Senākartā* (Army Organiser) by him. He remained loyal to him till the end. He was elevated to the office of Pēshwā by Shāhū in 1713, which office continued in his family till the ~~conquest~~ *taking over* of the Maratha territories by the British in 1818.

He had to deal with Maratha defectors as well as Nizāmu'l-Mulk the Mughal Subēdār of the Deccan. The latter was even trying to foil Bālājī's attempts to secure the allegiance of the Marathas to Shāhū's side, and it was Bālājī's ~~diplomacy and persuasion powers~~ *determination* that succeeded in thwarting Nizāmu'l-Mulk.

The Marathas remained neutral for some time in the internal quarrels of the Mughals. Nizāmu'l-Mulk was replaced by Syed Husain 'Alī as the governor of Mughal Deccan. The ~~circumstances~~ in Delhi forced Husain 'Alī to seek an alliance with the Marathas, and he sent a Maratha Shankarji Malhār Nargundhar (who had served both Shivaji and Rājārām in his younger days and who had now retired to Banaras)¹⁵⁹ to Satārā in 1717 for negotiating with Bālājī Vishwanāth. The Marathas were prepared to accept the vassalage of the Emperor on their own terms. Some of the ~~main~~ demands were

(i) The Mughals should restore all the Swarājya territories which had been under Shivaji, to Shāhū and allow the Marathas to retain their conquests in Berar, Gondwāna, Hyderabad and Karnatak (ii) The Marathas be allowed to collect *chauth* and *sardēshmukhī* from all the Mughal provinces in the South, and in return they should provide the Emperor with a contingent of fifteen thousand troops at the disposal of Imperial officers whenever necessary. (iii) The Marathas should make a cash payment of ten lakh rupees annually to the Emperor by way of *peshkash* or tribute (iv) Shāhū undertook to clear the Mughal provinces recently overrun by the partisans of Sambhājī and the Rājā of Kolhāpūr, of all freebooters.

There had been considerable changes in the Government at Delhi and a number of Emperors had been elevated to the throne and dethroned. It was this compulsion of events which made Bālājī go to Delhi to get (ratified) the terms of the treaty. He remained at the capital till September 1719 when Prince Raushan Akhtar was elevated to the throne as Muhammad Shāh. It was now that Nizāmu'l-Mulk who was then Governor of Mālwa, cultivated friendship with the Marathas. In March 1719 the Peshwā obtained from King-maker Husain 'Alī Khān, the three important sanads granting Shāhū the right to levy *Chauth* and *Sardēshmukhī* as well as the rights of autonomy or Swarājya, "the most noteworthy state documents in Indian History which constituted the Magna Carta of the Maratha Dominion"¹⁶⁰ He also succeeded in securing the release of Yēsū Bāi, the mother of Shāhū, from the custody of the Mughals where she had been confined since 1689.

Bālājī's visit to Delhi not only strengthened the position of Shāhū, but also widened the vision of the Marathas. Bālājī's son Bājī Rāo had accompanied his father to Delhi where he came into contact with the Rājput. Perhaps this early visit and the detailed observation of political conditions in Delhi inspired Bājī Rāo to found the Maratha Empire on the ruins of the Mughal Empire which he felt imminent.

Bālājī died at Saswad on 2 April 1720. His régime as Peshwā lasted barely seven years. The major task before him was to remove the disruptive forces and secure maximum support for Shāhū both in Maharashtra and at

*[It is significant that ten thousand Maratha horsemen under the command of the Peshwā took part in the virtual civil war which raged between the partisans of the Syed brothers Husain 'Alī and 'Abdu'l lāh and those of the regnant Emperor Farrukh Siyar, and it was these Marathas who turned the scales against the puppet Emperor. This was the first active participation of the Marathas in the affairs of the Empire and showed the way to the virtual occupation of North India by them. Ed.]

160 Sardesai, *op cit*,

[For the details of these taxes as well as the districts of Swarājya see Grant Duff, *op cit*, 337 n 1 and 338 n 3. Ed.]

the Mughal Court. He eminently succeeded in this task and created a firm position for Shāhū in the Maratha dominion as its Chhatrapati.

He introduced certain new policies in administration by reorganising the finances of the State. According to his scheme, the revenues of the state were shared by the Chhatrapati and his feudatories. The royal share was 34 per cent only whereas the lion's share was taken by the feudatories. The circumstances created by the civil war must have led Bālājī to adopt such a line of action, but in effect, this policy made the king virtually a pensioner dependent on his feudatories. It is also alleged that by promoting this jāgīr system, Bālājī not only departed from the principles laid down by Shivaji regarding the grant of *Saranjāms*, but also indirectly sowed the seeds of disruption of the Maratha State. For, this policy resulted in the creation of the Maratha confederacy which proved disastrous in later history by eroding Maratha solidarity. But it may be argued here that Bālājī took a realistic view of the situation by weaning away the Marathas from internecine strife in the Maratha region and diverting their energies to careers of fresh conquests and adventures.

The Treaty which Bālājī concluded on behalf of Shāhū with the Mughals in 1719 has become a subject of severe criticism among historians. Some regard it as a high mark of statesmanship of Bālājī, while others accuse him of converting the Maratha State into a vassal-state of the Mughals. They regard the three sanads which he brought in 1719 as the shackles of dependence by which the Marathas acknowledged Mughal sovereignty in the Deccan. The supporters of Tārā Bāi claim that while she was fighting for an independent Maratha State of Shivaji's type, Bālājī was working for a tributary dominion. However, it is very difficult to establish whether in actual practice the Marathas accepted Mughal sovereignty and whether they went on paying to the Emperor the tributes due from a vassal state.

Bālājī could get only seven years to consolidate the Maratha power. However, his achievements testify that he was supported by the common people, the peasantry and the Maratha nobility in his task of strengthening Shāhū's position. According to a contemporary account "Bālājī was looked upon by the ryot as their great benefactor."

(ii) *Baji Rao, 1720-1740*

Bālājī Vishwanāth had established his supremacy in administration to such an extent that the succession of his eldest son to the peshwāship was a foregone conclusion. Vishwanāth Rao, better known as Bājī Rao, was born in April 1700 and was thus a young man of 20 when his father died. But it took Shāhū a week to think over the matter and appoint him to the high office on 17 April 1720.

Bāji Rāo had been with his father on his fruitful visit to Delhi and seen the decadence to which the Empire had been a prey. He wanted now to break the narrow limits of Maharashtra and strike at the roots of the Empire, and this he wished to begin with the conquest of Mālwa. But this was opposed by the so-called Dakhni party headed by Sripat Rāo who advised Shāhū to see that the conquests of Shivaji and his successors were consolidated, and now that Swarājya had been recognised, it would be better to avoid any rupture with Delhi. The target of the forward movement should be Aurangzeb's conquests in the south rather than on an advance across the Narmada. Shāhū was, however, impressed by Bāji Rāo's fine presence, his eloquence and his objective, and fully agreed with Bāji Rāo's forward policy, a policy which he pursued throughout his long peshwāship of twenty years.¹⁶¹

The Advent of Nizāmu'l-Mulk Āṣaf Jah I

However effete and faction-torn the Mughal government at the centre might have been, Bāji Rāo had to face a new power in the Deccan in the person of the founder of the Āṣafiya dynasty, Nizāmu'l Mulk Āṣaf Jah I, one of the most remarkable personalities of the decadent period of the Mughal Empire. Born in 1671, he was the grandson of Khwājā 'Abid Qilich Khān who was present at the siege of Bijapur in 1686 and was killed at the siege of Golkonda in 1687. The Khwājā's son, Shihābu'd dīn, entitled Ghāziu'd dīn Khān Firōz Jang, born about 1649, was sent by Aurangzeb in the campaign against Poonā and Sūpā in 1683 and took a prominent part in the negotiations which led to the capture of Bijapur by Aurangzeb. Firōz Jang lost his eyesight in a plague epidemic at Bijapur but continued to hold responsible posts in the Empire to the end of his day.

Qamru'd dīn, who later became Nizāmu'l-Mulk Āṣaf Jah, accompanied his father Firōz Jang to the Deccan when he was barely thirteen, and in 1688 took an active part in the campaign against Siddi Mas'ūd. He was granted the title of Chin Qilich Khān in 1691 and was at Panhālā two years later. After the fall of Satārā and Parli he was appointed faujdār of Karnatak and was raised to the governorate of Bijapur in 1702. He thus knew all the ins and outs of the politics of the Deccan and the parties into which the Maratha people had become divided. On the death of Bahādur Shāh there arose parties and factions at Delhi which attempted to destroy each other, and the occupants of the throne were deposed, blinded and murdered at the will of the party in power. Chin Qilich Khān tried his best to avoid any party entanglement. He was the acknowledged head of the Tūrānī party while Syed Husain 'Alī Khān and Syed 'Abdu'l lāh Khān of Bārhā became the virtual rulers and king makers at the capital.

¹⁶¹ See Grant Duff I, 359 63

Perhaps in order to conciliate the Tūrānī party as also to remove him from their path, the Syeds appointed Chīn Qilich Khān Viceroy of the Deccan in 1713 and made the puppet Emperor, Farrukh Siyar, grant him the title of Nizāmu'l-Mulk. Arriving at Burhānpūr, (he) seems to have made a survey of the factions which then beset the Maratha State, and of their relations with the Empire. But the latitude given to Shāhū by the Syeds had in a way established a parallel government for the collection of chauth and sardēshmukhī. Nizām u'l Mulk repudiated the Maratha claims for chauth in the Mughal territories, and tried to suppress the authority of the local Maratha Kamavisdārs. He had close relations with Sambhājī of Kolhāpūr which he cemented through Chandrasēn Jādhav whom he raised to the rank of 7000 and 7000 horse ¹⁶². This attitude had naturally led to a clash with the Pēshwā Bājī Rāo, who was however defeated at Parād near Purāṇḍar. It was in this battle that Rāo Rambhā Nimbalkar distinguished himself as the commander of a Mughal contingent and this was the beginning of the friendship between Nizām u'l-Mulk and the Nimbalkars which was tested at the Battle of Shakar Khēṛā *.

Nizām u'l Mulk remained Viceroy of the Deccan only for two years and was replaced by Amīru'l Umarā Husain 'Alī Khān in that year while his brother Syed 'Abdu'l lāh Khān Qutbu'l Mulk became Prime Minister of the Empire. On Nizām u'l Mulk's departure, the Marathas again began to harass the Mughal territories and Husain 'Alī Khān had to negotiate with Shāhū to the latter's advantage. Nizām u'l Mulk's transfer from the Deccan to Mālwa in 1715 in fact relieved Bālājī from the tension that he created among the political leaders in the Maratha country.

Nizām u'l Mulk was now posted to the governorship of Mālwa, and he left Delhi in March 1719. He had been treated at Delhi with much impunity and high handedness and felt that he was powerless to control the fast disintegrating movements at the capital. He therefore resolved to return to the Deccan and complete the reorganisation of at least that part of the Empire. He crossed the Narmada, negotiated the surrender of Āsir in May 1720, and occupied Burhānpūr where he was joined by Sambhājī, Chandrasēn Jādhav, Rāo Rambhā Nimbalkar and other Maratha chiefs. His enemy No. 1 was now 'Ālim 'Alī Khān, nephew of the Syed brothers, who was administering the Deccan on behalf of 'Abdu'l lāh Khān and who was actively helped by a Maratha contingent backed by Shāhū. The battle which was joined near Bālāpūr in Berar on 21 July 1720 ended in the rout and death of 'Ālim 'Alī Khān. The Maratha contingent which had fought on his side under Khanderāo Dabhādē had to fall back.

162 Yūsuf Husain Khān Nizām u'l Mulk Āṣaf Jah I, 69-70, Kincaid and Parasnis *op cit*, 170.

* [The palace of the Nimbalkars locally known as Rāo Rambhā Ki Dēorhi still exists in Hyderabad. Ed.]

‘Ālim ‘Alī Khān’s death spelt the doom of the Syeds at Delhi and the new Emperor Muhammad Shāh took the opportunity of ridding himself of this faction. Nizāmu’l-Mulk was appointed Viceroy of the Deccan a second time, but he had to rush back to Delhi to assume the Premiership of the decadent Mughal Court there. Although he was joined by a number of Mughal and Rājput chiefs he felt that he could not cope either with rank opposition or with the disintegrating factors which were fast deteriorating the Empire. He was now sent to Mālwa and Gujarat to curb the recalcitrant elements there, and when he returned to Delhi he was thwarted there almost every day. He felt utterly powerless to curb the corrupt and lewd atmosphere of the Court and made up his mind to return to the Deccan. The Emperor was playing a double game. While outwardly supporting Nizāmu’l-Mulk, he issued a secret farmān to Mubārīz Khān, Governor of Hyderabad, to assume the Viceroyalty of the Deccan, and Shāhū was directed to help Mubārīz Khān. On the other hand Shāhū sent a Maratha contingent under the Peshwā Bājī Rāo to help Nizāmu’l-Mulk. The two armies met at Shakar Khēra (Buldānā district, Berar) about eighty miles east of Aurangābād, on 1 October 1724. Nizāmu’l-Mulk’s army defeated Mubārīz Khān and killed him in open battle. On hearing of Mubārīz Khān’s end the titular Emperor Muhammad Shāh again appointed Nizāmu’l-Mulk Viceroy of the Deccan and conferred on him the title of Āsaf Jāh.

The Battle of Shakar Khēra marks an epoch in the history of the Marathas as well as that of Mughal Deccan. While Nizāmu’l-Mulk Āsaf Jāh was able to occupy practically the totality of the six Mughal Sūbahs of the Deccan he could not prevent the Marathas from holding Shivaji’s patrimony and at the same time to advance beyond the Maratha region and occupy not merely the neighbouring regions of Mālwa and Gujarat but also the whole of Central and Eastern India and to make the Mughal Emperor a puppet in their hands.
